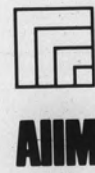
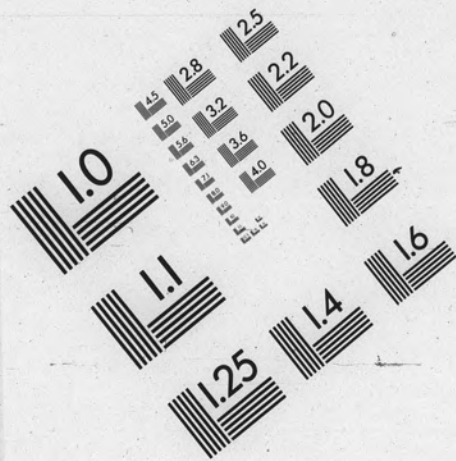
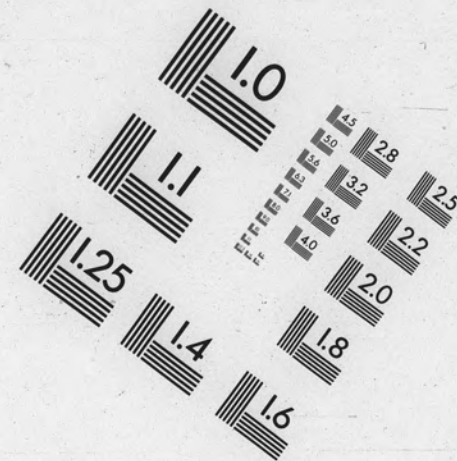


Journal, 1945.



Association for Information and Image Management

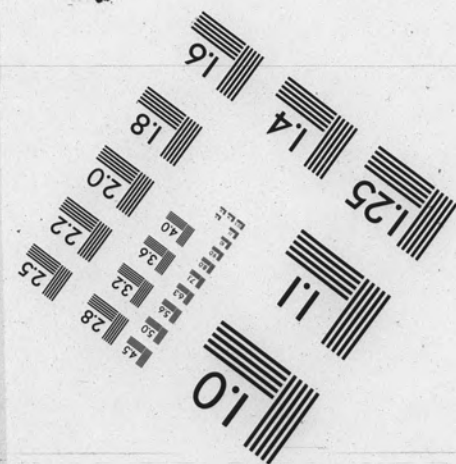
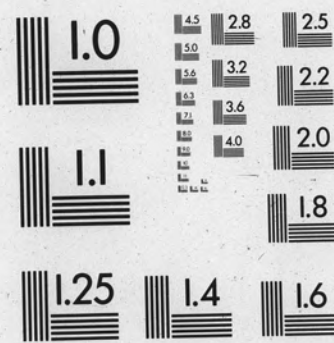
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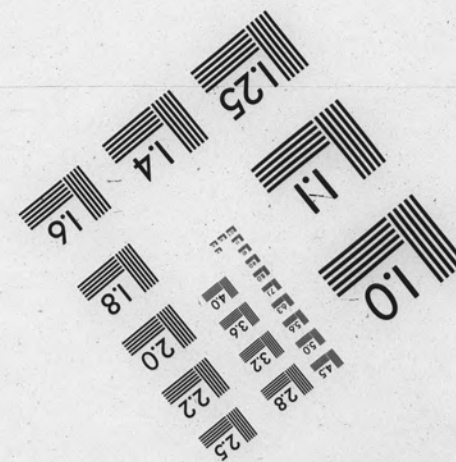
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1072

January 1st, 1945.

Memorandum To Clipping Service:

Thirty time thirty thousand have I dashed off mental notes since the arrival of Saturday's mail, along with the registered report, which came to hand in good order. May I say thanks and thanks again. There is a wonderful sensation that comes with a labor of love, ewpecially when that labor is a joint one, even though in mileage there appears to be some separation, although spiritually it is obviously identical.

Everything about the report appealed to me no end, all am I willing to accept, if you find the outlines as sketched therein satisfactory. As for acknowledgements and future disbursements, those are something which I trust may be eventaully ample and in such a fluid sate as may be drawn upon by either party without thought as to whose acccount is concerned, since it will be so pleasant to feel that it is joint.

They had a consultation of physicians for the Madam on Saturday. Influenza had her down, and they had to guard against pneumonia. This morning, I am told, she has asked for a good breakfast, so if her desire for food has returned and her fever has disappeared, I suppose we may assume she is on the mend again and will probably be alright again within a few days.

Her daughter screamed and yelled at her that I was seriously illl, and got her into a highly nervous state on my account, - which was ridiculous, of course. The point of all the racket was that the daughter wanted to try out sulphur g drugs on me. She finally convinced her mother that that was all that would save me, and so, to quiet the poor patient, I said I would accept the drugs, - which is a five day treatment and knocks one out completely, as you know. Well, with the Rosenwald thing staring me in the face, I naturally was goin to put myself out of commission when there was no need for it, but everything appeared to hinge on my taking of the drugs, and so I did a shadow act, but only that. Yesterday, Sister called for a sample of my urine, to check the progress being made by the sulphur drugs. A darkie friend of mine happened to be here at the time, and thinking his would reveal a much more interesting sample than my own, I asked him to accomodat me, which he did. About today, I suppose, there will be an enormous racket from down the road, saying that I have tricked them. Well,

1073

that will be alright, for the Madam will be stronger today, and she can stand the gaff much better than she could on Saturday. I shall merely remark that if they don't like my urine, it is too bad. After all I didn't ask them for their old drugs, and I haven't complained about them when forced upon me, and if they must complain about what they got in return, well that is ~~their~~ their hard luck.

In Saturday's mail came a note from The Natchez Press, saying that that periodical had suspended, as of December 21st. That will relieve me of the difficulties of getting a column out weekly, - quite a task under the present set up. After all, the thing has fulfilled its usefulness, so far as I am concerned, and if and when I can get somebody to work with me in pasting the columns together, - I can make up the connecting paragraphs and pages from out of my head, - then another book will be ready for the publishers. I think it may eventually turn out to be an interesting bit of Americana, but it is impossible for me to make the paragraphs between the columns without knowing the salient point in the columns that will sandwich in the connecting paragraphs, and so I shall let the columns cool on the shelf until an opportune time and assistant comes to hand.

Naturally, with the Madam flat on her back and aching, I shall have to forego doing the Cane River "egro prospectus" along the lines I had originally conceived, since I have no one to explore the data in the Ile Brevelle scrapbooks for me. I shall accordingly concentrate on a general survey of the subject, and send the extremely rough draft along to Robina for putting into some kind of shape and mailing. Yesterday I tried to work on the darned thing, but the Henrys are always in an uproar when their mama gets under the weather, and in the course of the day I reckon there were at least 15 people popping in and out of my house, asking what I thought about the "adam," could a nurse be summoned, where could a nurse be found, did I think she should go to the hospital, etc., etc., - all of which was not very conducive to concentration, and of course it was impossible for me at every interruption to recall at which point I had been interrupted and if I had actually jotted down a point or if I had merely been on the verge of doing so.

Well, today I shall get me a reader, and somehow we shall jog along, but I reckon the results will be fearful and wonderful, but we do what we can.

I must gallop now and get on with the day's tasks. Thanks again for the marvelous report 1944 was a little hectic in spots, but I am thankful for all the joys it brought, and somehow I have a feeling 1945 is going to be even better. For one thing, it's bound to advance one along the Meade Villa road.....

1074

January 4th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

"Tell them ladies I sure does thank them in the highest. I sure ain't going to do no paintin' tonight nor is I gwine to do any sleepin'. By mornin', Mary Frances is gwine to have some new under things and when I gets done, there'll be a little hem in that one dress there, and Mary Frances is gwine to be all fixed for her schoollin'."

That is what Clemence said when she came by yesterday and with glee went through the splendid collection of things you all sent.

Being as handy with a needle as she is with a paint brush or a wash tub, she immediately foresaw some warm under wear in the bathing suit, and a dozen different dresses for Mary Frances and herself in all the good things you sent. As in other places, as I understand it, there are but empty shelves here where once dress goods were displayed, and even the mail order houses are unable to fill orders when the darkies have the money to try a purchase. So doubly are your gifts appreciated, and it would have done your hearts good to have seen the pleasure that all the pretty things gave the good darlie.

Another point that puzzled and delighted Clemence was the fact that the larger dresses fit her to a "T" while the smaller dresses, or are a perfect fit for Mary Frances, with merely the necessity of a small hem in the latter. It looks like them things was just bought for us, and them sure must be nice ladies to think of Mary Frances, and me away off yonder.

So thanks from Clemence and Mary Frances and me, for joy brought to one heart somehow has a way of making all hearts glad.

During the past two days I have been more or less alone here, save for the Madam and the servants. Following her sulphur treatment, which apparently broke up her influenza, a cold struck the Madam and her fever bounced backup to 102, and so during the past 36 hours I have been doling out the medicine, - as sulphur must be taken at regular intervals. The codine and other curious pills that have been administered to lessen the pains of neuritis caused her to go out of her head yesterday afternoon and I really had quite a time for a couple of hours. But this,

over

1075

morning, - I pen these lines at 5 a.m., she appears back to normal mentally, and although the fever is still with her, she is obviously on the mend. Her daughter got mad at her yesterday because she wouldn't go stay with her, and walked out of Melrose, admonishing her husband to give her mother no medicine whatsoever. But I collared the physician in question and advised him to let me know immediately if he proposed to follow his duty as a doctor or to listen to a ridiculous raving of his wife. I got the medicine, - and that was all I wanted.

But I must confess to you that all this business is not very conducive to concentration on the general subject of "rural racial relations". But I plung along as best I can, - between semi-professional visits, and within another day or so, I shall bundle up the several pages and send them along to Robina for editing and transcription. At best the prospectus will be far from coherent and the way I would have it, but possibly it will get by somehow. Isn't it strange how this year's efforts are almost as panicky as last year's.

As for the Madam, her housegirl remains with her at night, but the latter has developed a severe cold and throat infection which makes her more of a liability than an asset. I have called in two of the Henry boys this morning, - and they will have to cast about to find someone to stay with the Madam more or less permanently. I think, for she shouldn't be left to the care of untutored servants when her health is no better than it has been during the past year. As for her prospects, she is practically on the road back to herself again, but she should have a responsible person within call at all times, - and that is a Henry problem and not mine, - and they are going to have a time getting anyone, too, since la fille will always put a spindle in the spinning wheel, and the thread is bound to be snarled from week to week, - which is not any province of mine. Save for being a little tired, my own aches and pains appear to be on the way out, and as soon as I get old Rosenwald into the mail and there is someone here to sit on the lid, I shall take to the big road, - probably about Thursday of next week, - although under the circumstances, the precise date for my departure must of necessity be tentative. If things go right, however, someone will be here within a month or so to lend balance to the curious set up in the big house, and if old Rosenwald does what is expected of him, I shall feel free to undertake a lot of things I have in mind in the manuscript department.

I must now hit off a flock of letters on a variety of subjects and then make a round in the medical department, so you will forgive me for breaking off before adding anything more to make this letter more dull. Thanks again from Clemence and Mary Frances for all the good cheer and warmth to body and heart which your package brought with it....

1076

January 7th, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Wonderfully and fearfully contrived, - that about covers the prospectus which goes forward in Monday's mail to Robina for editorial reconstruction and typing.

The Madam remains in the bed, with sulphur drugs being administered every six hours, and plenty of codine and Heaven knows what all, by way of anti-pain pills, sleeping potions, etc. I think she will be off the sulphur within another day or two, and that will mean that I shall discontinue my frequent visits to the big house throughout the night. With a little extra sleep on my own behalf, I shall probably perk up immediately, and when I get a bit more normal, I shall give thought to getting into the big road. I presume, however, that I shall not get away this week, but probably next week, - although I may make it this coming Thursday.

A letter in yesterday's mail came through from Barnett Kane, enclosing a letter of recommendation for me, - to be sent to Rosenwald. It was all very flattering, - from one who understands little save what goes on within his very limited sphere. He reports that he is working madly and sees no one. I reckon Louisiana Plantations are being cooked up at the point of his pen, and I have no doubt it will be a creditable piece of research.

On the Shreveport scene, Robina reports that the Dormons spent New Years in that place, having gone up from Briarwood to visit their brother and his wife, and to spend a night with Robina. It seems Caroline and Virginia hooked their trailer on to their automobile, and brought a gob of plants, - sweet olive, crabapple, etc., to landscape Robina's yard. Caroline would include a crabapple. But Robina doesn't want to get her grass plot all enmeshed in Miss Dormon's bushes, and so there was something in the Pulling and Hauling Department, as between Caroline and Robina, as to what would be planted at all, - and where those items would be placed. Like Aunt Cammie, Caroline has an eye for an unoccupied spot where a plant or a shrub or a tree might grow readily, - and there the thing is planted, - quite unmindful of its relation to the rest of the layout. Naturally that's the way man-made jungles are made, - and Briarwood is just about that.

(over)

1077

1077

I think I told you in a recent report that The Press
suspended as of December 21st. The editor wrote a nice letter,
expressing the hope that sometime in the future circumstances might
enable us to undertake something jointly.

Under separate cover, - within the next day or so, - I shall
be sending a couple of Cane River primitives. The larger one is
by Clemence, - the smaller by Mary Frances. You might skip
mention of these to James. I selected ones that seemed more or
less typical of their present mood. For instance, the parasol is
so typically Clemence, that no other feature could be more expressive.
And she loves to do them, and somehow they always look a little
Chinese to me. I know that James would be delighted to know
you have them, but I rather he would not, as he might rightfully
feel he should have had a hand in the selection, and for my part, I
so wanted you to have something in this particular vein that I
didn't want to leave it to him to make the selection. Therefore
you might as well not mention it to him.

I saw Clemence yesterday, stopping by her cabin for a
few moments, while out for a little airing. The place was spick
and span, but greatly resembling an oriental bazaar, what with
all the treasures "from them ladies", - laid out and being pressed,
etc. The bathing suit, converted into a nice warm undershirt for
Mary Frances, did my heart much good, as it was deftly transformed,
and when the chill winds sweep down the river road during February,
it will be good to know that Mary Frances is making her trip in search
of education much more warmly clad than had it not been for
you all.

On the 21st of January, I received reports that the Dorman
New Year in that place, having come up from his work to visit
their father and his wife, and to spend a night with them.
They took the Madam off sulphur yesterday, and I believe
she is now on the mend.

In this morning's mail I am sending Robins the Rosenwald
stuff for her to straighten out, - which will be something
of a task. Janu of 22, 1907, and where those items were placed.
I am feeling better and will eventually take to the road, but
perhaps not until next week. Today's mail will be a determining
factor.

(over)

1078

1078

January 8th, at Melrose.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Although I posted a Memorandum this morning, I write
another line this evening, - it is now 8 p.m., for in the
mean time, an excellent clipping came to hand, and I want to
respond without delay, although I have nothing very startling to
say.

As in the case of the calendars, wherein I notice we both
had in mind the girl friend at the same time, but expressed ourselves
in two different manners, - so in the case of the item from
Baton Rouge, arriving at about the time I had advised that without
letting Baton Rouge know, I was forwarding what I liked to
think was a somewhat typical expression of the Sepia "inderilla".
You may judge for yourself on receipt of the same if the one
pleases you more than the other.

You ask about the Cardinals. They stay with us all the
year round in varying degrees of musical accompaniment. The
Madam has an apple, cut in half attached to her bannister on the
back gallery of the big house where the mocking birds vie with
the cardinals to make the most of it. I have a little shelf
on the sunken garden side of my house where occasionally a
cardinal come to dine, although I am always getting a bigger batch
of blue jays than anything else. The latter are really beautiful,
but they are such noisy pirates that I like them not at all
save for their beauty.

In the summer time, the cardinals are at their best in
the song department. Especially in the afternoons, the male
bird begins a conversation with his mate. Usually it is
made of of two loud whistles. A pause follows, and then one hears
the female responding with a long, slightly more musical whistle.
They sometimes keep that going for hours, but usually varied a little
in this manner. Just to play a trick on her mate, the female will
sometimes delay making an immediate response. After waiting a bit,
the male will whistle twice again and then wait. Sometimes he
gets his answer and sometimes not. But if he has to give the
double whistle a third time, he does it with a vengeance, almost
ripping the air in his irritation. Then, with almost raucous
glee, the response come promptly, and the two of them then
fly into separate perches in other trees or bushes, and the whole
business starts over again.

(over)

8701

1079

You spoke of your original description of the verdivert as being crude. You were perfectly wrong, for it coincided exactly with what you and only you could have so skillfully detected. There was an earthy element, plus smoke, in the batch I sent. I had dug it a couple of days before, and knowing how fine and clinging the soil is, - and how difficult it is to get it all cleaned off, what with the incredible entanglement of the roots, I washed and kept water running of the roots for two days. When it was time to get the little package off, the stuff wasn't quite dry, and so I put it in a chair before my fireplace where a big old oak and pine log were doing their best to help out. Naturally some of the fine soil remained on the roots and to it clung the smoke, and only you would have detected the combination. Eventually the soil will shake off, and then, when you dampen the roots again, I think you will discover the real aroma, which, in itself, is quite sympathetic in perfume to the other two elements.

Under separate cover, - no I guess in this letter, I shall enclose today's note from Essae Mae, which is of no particular interest, and which you may destroy when finished with, if you care to. The fact that she invites me to her place is interesting since it will give me additional opportunity to talk department of documents with her. Since she is leaving for Chicago on the 16th, I think I shall put off my trip to Baton Rouge until the following week, - the last in January. This will give me an opportunity to get back on my feet a bit, for my body feels a little old yet, and I should like to be in the "pink" when I contact the Louisiana University Press Board. I presume I shall return here, via Natchez, which is certainly round about, in one way, - at least it makes two sides of a triangle instead of one, but there are several things I would to keep green there, and I am anxious to run out to Washington and wander around Meade Villa a little with Mrs. Brandon. She can recall where originally all the slave quarters and other out-buildings stood, and I should very much like to have that clearly in my mind from one like her, who is probably one of the few people in the world who can hand it on to us. Should things go well, and as we would have them, I think it would be pleasant to contemplate putting some of those outbuildings back in their original positions. After all, in putting up a garage for example, it might just as well conform to the original lay out, - especially if it suits the needs of the times. Then, too, I like to think out some of the possibilities of other details relative to the place, for getting things well in mind not only affords the pleasure of anticipation, but sometimes simplifies things when they come into being. But even better than these reasons are or is the fact that it gives me an opportunity to share all these things with someone who alone understands and loves them for the same reason as do I, - that they can be shared.

(1079)

Project about Rosenwald
School for mulattoes
about Jones family
mulattoes

1801

January 13th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

This is the month of Celine's birthday, and the Madam sent her a cake and some stockings yesterday afternoon.

I found the old lady sitting on the front gallery, doing some mending. The day was warm, although the breeze was cold. Celine was re-inforced against the wind by being bundled up in a big old bathrobe. Being short, her several layers of clothing made her look twice as short.

She fell to talking about ages, and explained why it is difficult for people of her years to determine their exact number of years. According to her, in the old days, it was the custom of parents to keep the year of their birth from their children in order that, as the children reached maturity, the parents could exert control over them longer if the children believed themselves to be 15, say, whereas in reality, they might actually be 21.

As for herself, Celine remarked that she knew herself to be at least 93, even though "folks say I am only eighty-ten".

Her husband, Joe Rocque, came in as we sat chatting, - he is only 84. We had moved inside the house because of the breeze. The floor is mostly dirt, with but a few of the original bricks in the floor when it was a Convent prior to the Yellow Fever scourge of 1853, when the nuns flew out. An occasional chicken wandered in and was shooed out, and if the dogs nosed around too much, Celine would use her long distaff to prod them away. They weren't at all concerned by her gentle use of the rod, but merely glanced at her as much as to say, "Well, alright, if you want me to move, I will, but I am just doing it to satisfy your whim".

She cut the cake and opened some cherry wine, and the three of us drank to everybody's health, and I returned home. Her mind seems more vigorous than ever, and her ability to chuckle over human frailties is mellowness itself. A wonderful old woman, Celine, - never a child of her own but the foster mother of 45, and still harboring a few even now, - at eighty-ten, - extras from other people's overflow.

Yesterday's mail was thin, although there was a duplicate letter of an original sent direct to Rosenwald by Essae Mae. It was a grand letter of introduction to the Cane River and of recommendation of me. I sent the duplicate to "obina for enclosure with the other stuff being forwarded today.

1081

I have a new project in mind on which old Rosenwald can spend a few thousand dollars, - if I can sell him the idea. What with la Haygood threatening to pass by this way this Spring, - and what with the prospectus already on the way to the Board, that Chicago group is going to have some insight to the peculiar racial set up in this locality. At the present time, the Convent provides the only educational facilities for the children of mulattoes in this area, and the grades covered are merely the primary ones.

Because of their racial prejudice, the mulattoes simply will not send their children to the established Rosenwald schools attended by the negroes. Accordingly the children of mulattoes must of necessity either cease their education when they have finished at the convent, - unless their parents be rich enough to send them North to school.

What I would like to do is to get Rosenwald to build a school for mulattoes here, covering the higher grades and the highschool courses. I reckon this is possible only if Rosenwald will recognize the the Cane River mulatto represents a distinct race in itself, being not so much the descendant of a white and a black, but rather a by-product of a long line of mulatto ancestors, which with the generations has fused elements of both so closely intermingled that it is neither one nor the other but something unique in itself.

Of course the building of a separate school for the mulattoes would tend to confirm the racial feelings already rampant, and probably would not be smoothing the differences, but perhaps merely making them more apparent. Be this as it may, the fact remains that several hundred mulatto children in this area, if such a school is not built, will never get any education beyond the primary grades. I think I shall drop that in old Rosenwald's lap. The come back will be that the mulattoes ought not to be so fussy, - at the expense of their children's educational welfare, and should make the most of the negro schools. I agree to that, but nevertheless the mulattoes will not do it, - because of the same racial prejudices that keep white children from attending negro schools in the South, and it remains for Rosenwald to decide if it is better for the mulattoes to grow up without an education beyond the primary grades, or if it is better to concede their racial antipathies and attempt to bring racial understandings through education rather than by refraining from bringing enlightenment through educational facilities which the Board might provide.

I have talked to some of the mulattoes regarding the general idea.

Bill Llorenze is fairly representative of forward looking mulattoes. He is almost white, has a million dollar personality and a wife and five children. Formerly he ran the "elrose saloon which was a reduce to a market when prohibition was voted in about a year ago. H.

1082

Bill says such a school would be a God-send. With his market making but little, and times uncertain ahead, he has no idea how he is going to educate his children, save by sending them to the Convent, and that it appears he will have no money to send a single one of them away to school. The Llorenze family is old Cane River stock, - one Seraphine Llorenze having married one of the early "etoyers. Mulatto race consciousness prevents his family from sending their children to a negro school. Bill says one of the most acute problems in this unique Cane River situation is that too many mulattoes think they are better than the negroes merely because they are mulattoes, whereas in reality, there are just as many rogues among the mulattoes as there are among the negroes. He stresses the point, however, that since the mulatto of fair breadth of understanding feels that his race is different from either the white or the negro and that the children must be educated in a school of their own, - not that the mulatto is better than the negro, but merely because he is different, has a different sense of values, has a different religion, - the mulattoes are all Catholic and the negroes all Protestant, and so forth and so on.

Bill Jones is another representative of the more successful mulatto.

A lot of mulattoes on Cane River consider the Jones as newcomers. Old Carroll Jones did not come into this region until about Civil War times, - perhaps just a little before. Old Carroll was a mulatto, - offspring of a white man and a negress of Tennessee. Three generations have evolved, and the Jones are just beginning to get into the accepted racial status. The Jones are rich. Bill Jones' uncle, Mathew, was so rich he could get himself involved in debts to the extent of \$371,000.00 at the time of his death. His brother, young Carroll, took over Mathew's properties. I suppose the present Jones family is worth from a quarter to a half million.

Bill and his two brothers, Nolan and Randolph, were educated at the University of Chicago. On their father's death, they took over the Estate, - excellent land, lying above Celine's and running along both sides of Cane River. Mathew's children were no account and wandered off to California or some place. Carroll's children were intelligent and industrious. The three boys got together, and after looking over the situation, decided that the Estate, made up of two or three plantations, could be most economically operated, if there were one head to decide all details. Accordingly Nolan and Randolph agreed that Bill should make all decisions and that they would abide by whatever decisions he made. Remarkable to tell, they have abided by that decision, and the Jones properties are solvent and making money, with all three boys, - each married to ex-school teachers, giving all their time to making a success of the Estate.

(over)

2801

1083

Bill Jones has two or three children. He can afford to send them to school, but would prefer to have them get their education here. Accordingly he strongly favors the idea of a school at Helrose for mulattoes. He says it is difficult to estimate the number of pupils that would attend it because there are so many mulattoes who have left Cane River for various reasons, primarily economic, who would strongly prefer to send their children back here to the country to be educated, were there any facilities for such a purpose.

And so the thing revolves.

I shall continue to explore the field, its possibilities and its disadvantages, of which most certainly the recognition of the differences is the most obvious.

And when la Baygood comes by, I shall show her the mulatto area, - at present some 20 miles in length, point out the aspirations of its more responsible citizens and see if her aid can be enlisted.

Aunt Cammie thinks it would be a great thing if it could be put over. Apparently no one has ever thought of it before, and even though it might not work, it will do no harm to try, - and even though it fails, it is bound to make old Rosenwald conscious of the fact that there are a few side lights to the racial problem that could employ a few more headaches for the Board. And if, by some miracle, the thing could be established, a whole flock of young people could get some education, otherwise denied them, and armed with a little more understanding than would otherwise be their lot, their lives in years to come, - and their children's lives, might be the happier if education thus achieved, would give them some extra munition to cope with their better adjustment to the world in which they find themselves. And that would be the important thing, of course.

I apologize for rattling along at such a great rate on a subject which must of necessity be but of secondary interest, - if interest at all, to you. And yet I have a feeling on the other hand, that all these curious little sidelights on the vaster problem of racial relations may hold a few faint glimmerings of interest, and even at the chance to boring you, it is a great pleasure to share such subjects with you.

And as a post script to all this, I must confess to you that for the most part, the mulattoes interest me much less than the negroes. Still, I cannot be unmindful of the very special consideration due this peculiar situation in which the mulatto finds himself, and I most certainly would be terribly selfish if I should let an opportunity slip by wherein there is an element for the advancement of these racially unfortunate people.

Clase Diary
Movie 1084
Prospect?

2801

March 15th, 1945.
Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Only a note and an enclosure this morning.

Of the latter, there is no especial interest, but I like you to keep abreast of things from Mrs. Brandon. You may destroy it when finished with it, as I have no use for it.

A letter from Caroline Dorman reports her 25th or 100th intention to get down this way, only to be stopped by some unforeseen circumstance. I believe influenza is her present problem.

I tentatively set January 25th to run down to Baton Rouge, and shall probably be away for a week. I shall let you know in a later report.

The weather during the past week has been marvelous, and oceans of narcissus blossoms are carpeting the bulb garden under the pecane trees to the east of the big house. The Madam was slowly mending, thanks to the sunshine and all, but a tempestuous Sunday has wrecked her progress. I'm afraid, - c'est toujours la fille naturellement, - and this morning I shall merely have to start picking up the piece and putting them together again. I have done it so often, I ought to be accustomed to it by now, but I notice that each time I notice that the victim functions a little less perfectly than before. I believe there is enough reserve to last for years, - in spite of the constant on-slaughts, but one never knows, and nothing can be done to block the on-slaughts, since la S. always accepts as gospel truth the fabulous lies of la G., which, fortunately, are currently directed, as usual, against her brothers.

I sleep pretty well these days, but with the Madam in bed before 6 o'clock and nothing for me to do until 5 the next morning, I find myself listening to my radio quite a bit. To escape "bougey-woogey" I sometimes find myself on the strangest programmes, and not infrequently in desperation for anything in the talk line, I ponder on some of the curious sermons that go on the air between 11 and 1. If I read the times correctly, there is likely to be a great lapse in morals as soon as the war is over, - if not before, and as always happens in such cases, the swing downward (downward) is accompanied by waves of religious revivals.

(over)

1801

1085

With this in mind, I am giving thought again to the Chase diary. Following the last war, old Cecile Lux de Mille made The Sign of the Cross, being the life of Jesus, as I recall, - to meet that religious resurgence. It seems to me the Chase diary provides an all-American religious theme which might suit the de Mille purposes to a "T", were I able to contact him.

I think I have mentioned before that old Chase, the poor preacher who married the wealthy daughter of John Henderson, lived in almost feudal lavishness at Mantua, - while not engaged in chasing all over Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and Heaven knows where all, as agent of The Bible Society, contacting all kinds of people, having all sorts of thrilling experiences, and ending up by living at elegant Mantua during the war, where he went through all the miseries that the followers of Jesus experienced on a different scale.

With de Mille's known weakness for 19th century stuff in America, and his flight into the religious on occasion, it seems to me this medium should be perfect. Now, the problems involved in the case, in part, are these: -

How to get the stuff out of the diary, - the stuff suitable for a movie script?

And that accomplished, how to get hold of de Mille's ear?

Through Dr. Miller I might contact one of his secretaries, one Mr. Harris, - and I think I shall start that way first. For some reason, which I know not, I feel I should hold off turning the manuscript over to anyone to extract the stuff from it without me, - which may be pretentious on my part, but frankly I have that feeling. Then, too, isn't it wiser to get the notes I have in mind as an integral part of the diary before attempting to submit it for consideration, since that would give me additional claim on the material? And now that the Press isn't functioning, would it be wise to try to get the Bible Story printed for copyright, - before doing anything by way of gesture toward Hollywood, - and if Yes is the answer, then the time element would be considerable before the idea could be presented, and the propitious moment lost.

I rattle off these ideas as I write, without giving them thought, and were you ~~here~~ here, we would discuss the problems and either pitch in or shelve the thing. In the mean time, I would ask your opinion on one point: Do you think I am ~~right~~ right in withholding the manuscript from any collaborator at the moment until I think the thing through further, or would you think it better to dump the thing into a collaborators lap, or might there be a worth-while wait to see what old Rosenwald does, so that perhaps I might employ Mr. Martin to assist or some such..... As always, your opinion will be greatly welcomed...

1801

1086

January 18th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

A report to hand, and a thousand thanks for the detailed accounts of a dozen subjects.

It was certainly kind of you to take so much personal interest in calling on the agents concerning "52".

It seems trite to me, and yet perhaps a forward should be inserted to explain that item.

The agency is at least the second or third point of origin to express the opinion that the little book is too limited in its appeal. Certainly those people ought to know more about such things than I. For myself, however, I feel that the thing is designed especially for the average reader. It floors me when one or the other has remarked upon its religious appeal, for I cannot see that at all.

If I understand the little story at all, it is designed to illustrate the extreme intelligence of an untutored youth in his first encounter with the dominant power of organized society. Possessed of little or nothing save native wit and a deck of playing cards, the boy suddenly discovers, when confronted by the Mayor, that organized society in that particular city has put a ban on cards. To avoid losing his chief and perhaps only stock in trade, the boy cleverly converts his gambling paraphernalia into something quite the opposite, - a symbol of the Holy Book, and the Mayor is so convinced by the cleverness of the youth that he realizes he will get along alright where ever he may find himself, and sums up his admiration by saying: "You is free born", - meaning, it seems to me, that any one so smart as such a youth needs no laws to either assist or hinder.

Now that is what I get out of the story, and possibly I have read something into it that isn't there. But if you read it along those lines, then I am quite sure that at least two of us are at a loss to find anything religious about the thing. After all, in quoting from the Scriptures, the boy is merely demonstrating his ability to adjust himself to a new problem.

(over)

1087

There is a slight interruption of approximately 24 hours between this side of the page and the foregoing, and I resume this report at 4 a.m.

Mr. Bachelier came in yesterday morning as I was writing and from that point on, the day got completely out of hand. By noon the Madam was in bed with indigestion where she remained the balance of the day, her physician coming to see her at nine o'clock last night. During the afternoon, Mrs. Rand drove up from Alexandria with one of her sons and his wife. It was good to have a couple of ladies about the place to lend a hand, for although with one arm broken, Mrs. Rand can do more for the Madam than half a dozen other women.

I can't recall if I referred to your unsuccessful attempt to contact la belle Helene. I had a note from Essae Mae, - or rather the Madam had one Monday, in which she remarked she had recently heard from the same lady who was now up to her ears in some January list or other. I am hoping your next go-round will strike no similar obstacles, although I can readily appreciate your disappointment in this case, since your opportunities to get down town are so infrequent.

From where I sit, it appears that I shall take to the big road on Thursday next, although there is a chance that it may be a day or two later. According to the latest news, the General speaks at Baton Rouge on Monday, the 29th, in which case, he may or may not come here first, and in the event he does not, it is said a car will be sent from here to pick him up after the speech before he crawls back into his bomber and returns to Washington. Such flying up and down the road would of course afford me an excellent opportunity to travel more conveniently than by public conveyance, and at the same time, I may find an opportunity to chat with him, too, which should prove quite interesting, for it is my understanding he recently spent some time in Warm Springs with Mr. Big, and his impressions of that personality might be worth hearing.

This morning I am hitting off a few licks a little earlier than is my custom, - having fallen behind in some respects during Mr. Bachelier's visit, and at the same time, running into some extra pieces of out-going stuff, since the Madam hasn't written any letters since before Dec. 26th, I think, and I must get some off in her behalf. Then, too, I have a couple of ideas I want to rattle around a little, too, and thus the day starts, - and it's good to start it thus. I enclose a recent letter of no especial interest, I think, but thought there might be elements in it to keep you posted. I'll be taking pen in hand again shortly, and in the mean time thanks no end for your grand report to hand.....

1088

Memorandum for Clipping Service:

Thanks much for the report which came to hand in the last post.

I respond but with a leisurely gait, having a blister on the end of the middle finger of my left hand which slows up hammering on this keyboard.

The enclosures may be disposed of, as I do not need either of them. The Haygood item is merely a form letter, of course, but I like to keep you informed, even to that extent.

The bags of indigestion which put the Madam in the bed last week, has eased, and yesterday she spent most of the day on her sofa. She does not come down stairs as yet.

It now appears I shall leave here on Thursday, the 25th, as planned. That will enable me to ride down to Baton Rouge in the morning, instead of arriving there at 9 p.m., - which is ever so much better, - if it works. One seldom can count on tentative schedules at this place. There is a meeting there requiring the presence of the son, - who runs this plantation, - and a flock of others. At the moment he is in Memphis, but may return here Wednesday, and depart Thursday. The General is scheduled to speak there on Monday or Tuesday, and may pass back this way, but I shall not contact him while there, since I have things to do, and because I think I shall run up to Natchez on my way back.

I have nothing on the docket for that place at the moment, but I think it a good opportunity to do some "fence building", and I should ever so much like to see Mr. Martin on several counts, not the least of which is his acquaintance with the Chase family from way back when, and because, - should old Mr. Rosenwald come through, Mr. Martin might be able to assist me much in a flock of things.

As I write these lines, however, I discover an idea begins running about in my head. I know nothing about the Bible Society, of which Benjamin Chase was such a distinguished early member and pioneer in the Great Southwest. I believe, however, that this organization is still very much alive and extremely wealthy. I believe they publish Bibles by the billion, and that Mrs. George Kelly of Melrose, in Natchez, is of the family dominating the production of that commodity. I shall run out to Melrose while in Natchez and get some particulars. It is possible that The Bible Society, on learning of the existence of the Chase manuscript, might welcome an opportunity to bring

1089

it out, as a precious documentary history of the inception of the Bible from Alabama westward through Texas. With appropriate notes, the thing could be copyrighted, and once in book form, the script might more readily be submitted to old Mr. de Mille.

Well, I am glad I thought of that angle. Perhaps the Natchez trip will hold something aside from fence building.

I have had a preliminary get together with some of the more civic minded mulattoes, and we are getting some rough figures together relative to students, teachers, etc., that would benefit by a school at Melrose, should old Rosenwald be in a mood. This seems a little premature, and yet with la Haygood threatening to pass this way at Easter time, it may be well to get particulars in hand as soon as possible, - so in case.....

I shall write little more this morning, as it seems to go rather slowly, what with the mechanical handicap and I must drop James and Essie Mae lines this morning, as well as a flock of notes for the Madam to this one and that one, before seven o'clock, when I expect to do much gardening, - transplanting camellias, cutting down trees, planted too close together at some time a decade ago. For the axe department, I shall have that genius in that specialty, - one Mitchell "allien, a kind of ebony Gary Cooper, whose family is all light-light in coloring, but who, for himself, reverted to Mendliam and in spite of his straight hair, is much too deep a chocolate to do anything but embarrass and remind his family, - through sheer coloring of their negroid ancestry. I think I have spoken to you of Mitchell before. He has that remarkable 6th sense with an axe which Babe Ruth had with a baseball bat. One lick at a tree, and the thing struts quivering. With a great block of wood, on which the average person would spend hours whacking away at it to no particular purpose, Mitchell needs take but one swing at the thing, and clop the whole thing is shattered. Chinese magnolias, red buds, crepe myrtles, etc., are marked for destruction this morning. They are large items which are ruining splendid grandiflora magnolias, and accordingly must give way in order that the latter may survive. For transplanting there are other negroes. I welcome this outdoor exercise and the association it provides and the physical tiredness that follows.

During Mr. Bachelier's recent visit, I had a good opportunity to learn much from him, - an expert on plant life. He usually came by this house at 6 a.m., and we spent the day together working in the gardens. It wasn't very conducive to correspondence, but it was certainly helpful in the horticultural department. Eventually I am hoping to be able to put some of this instruction to work on a few acres at Meade Villa. From what I have seen of the place, I should say off hand that camellias, gardenias and roses ought to do especially well in that neighborhood and soil and terrain. We shall see....

Will speak of other points in your letter in a subsequent note, pictures for Lemence and all....

1090 (I should be back about the 3rd of February. General Henry is flying down on Saturday, and that will bridge my absence for the Madam)

January 24th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Thanks so much for your report which came to hand in the last mail. I shall respond immediately to the several points as they come to mind, for being pressed for time, I may have to break off before I cover as much as I should like to.

It was sweet of you to scout the idea of acquiring the Chase manuscript in the original. As it is prized by its owner as a family heirloom, I think acquisition would not be possible at a fair figure. When the transcript was being made, I anticipated the possibility of using it in part or in toto, and accordingly wrote the owner, asking if I might use it either in part or in its entirety. My letter was somehow delayed in transit, and when the response came through, - in care of Mr. Martin it was included with a batch of other particulars, - Mr. Martin being a relative, - and it chanced that the letter, granting use of the manuscript in any way I saw fit, was not signed. I think this letter, however, is sufficient to hold off any claims on the part of the present owner, for it is my belief that he does not realize he did not sign it, and therefore, knowing that permission has been granted, will not think of making any objection.

In the event that I should be able to interest the Bible Society in a portion of the manuscript, I think I could readily get another expression of approval from the present Mr. Chase without any difficulty whatsoever.

There is a great deal of extraneous material in the manuscript as the old man was ultra religious, and frequently went into great detail as to what he ought to be thankful for, especially in times of great physical pain, since, according to him, God was honoring him by persecutions in order that when freed from them, he might the more fully appreciate his blessings, etc., etc. ad infinitum. Much of that is very dull, of course, and would of necessity have to be eliminated.

In seeing Mr. Martin early next week, I shall further explore the possibility of acquiring the original manuscript, however, with a view to getting a rough idea as to the price at which it might be secured, - if, indeed; it is available.

(over.

1091

I enclose a letter from Mary Rhoades, who lives on Roane's town property. Her husband, Herbert, was with the Miss. River Commission for a number of years and knows a lot about land in the Vicksburg-Natchez region, - and he is nice. Hardening of the arteries has forced him to retire. Mary has written some short stories for Liberty or Colliers, and is currently working on a book about The "American Dilemma". She has frequently sought my opinion on various points. I urge her to finish the manuscript, approaching the problem, not from the usual tragedy angle, but for once presenting a case in which the thing turns out happily for everyone concerned. It seems to me that too much has been written about the unfortunate angles. After all, people of different races must have married sometimes without any great tragedy eventuating, and probably played out their lives with about as much satisfaction to themselves as most people are allotted. I think a book on such a plane would be refreshing and if well done, full of lots of hope for vast sections of readers who are forever "viewing with alarm" or shedding tears of despair.

I was so interested in the clipping from Madam Roosevelt's My Day. I had not heard of the society which she mentioned, and should like to know more about it. I am writing for particulars. Certainly the points she made were convincing, - the need for education not being confined to the schoolroom, etc.

Much to people's amazement, - and particularly to Caroline Dornon, I have sometimes expressed myself as believing that the ultimate solution of the racial problem, - the world over, - is the gradual absorption of the various distinctive races into one strain. It knocks anti-negro believers down, - they are outraged, in fact, and yet, I must say, that a mixture of the pure strains seems to be the most logical thing in the world. After all, I can't see how any particular race thinks it has a corner on all the cardinal virtues. Personally I enjoy contacting people representing a more or less pure racial status, but as the world gets smaller and the people move into closer contact and equality, I can not see any other eventuality than that the strick lines will dissolve and so mingled that race consciousness will eventually evaporate. But that is something for future generations, and not for us to go into a big flurry about.

In passing, I must remark that I am not infrequently amused when I hear an oldster orate upon the glories of racial purities, - damning the mulatto, the while, whereas in reality, members of that same individual's family have united in marriage with Semites, and after producing children, have naturally broken down those racial lines, so vaunted by the oldster, who, without thinking, applies the virtues of racial mixture to his own family, but damns it in other racial combinations.

continued on back of enclosure.

1092

1092

I make the most of this sheet, since a third one might be rather too late for regular postage.

Monday - blue
Dear Francois,

You have us all in a dither, wondering what has happened to you, picturing the victim of all sorts of interesting and otherwise maladies. Can't you drop

thus a line and set our minds at rest, at least? Every few days, from one place or another, it's "What's become of Francois? Have you heard from him?" So

loosen up on postage, and in case you've already been wafted to your heavenly reward, at least try to "get through" a spiritual communication. All is about the same on Ravenna. Alice has come and gone, without quite so many parties and so much fanfare as usual, and the rest of us are quiet as before. Brent has been sent to Nebraska, and little Roane is poised for flight in pursuit,

leaving Lalie to grandmother to her heart's content. The Little House, sad to say, is in complete confusion, its last stage being definitely worse than its first. However, things are gradually being done, and some day perhaps the Maharajah of Beverly will recline in glorious indolence upon her icky-ay. (I do wish someone who decide once and for all how that darned thing is spelled. I get into a tizzy

over it every time it comes up and never can make up my mind to anything positive.) The book is progressing by infinitesimal degrees - progress, if any, being scarcely perceptible. In fact, I think I go backward about as much as forward. And most of the time I am overcome by the futility of my effort and the presumption involved

in making it at all. So you see I'm badly in need of your reassurance as to its vital importance. (Of which it hasn't any, as Ferriday would say.) The Big Bad Wolf is very quiet and harmless and dirty, Ferriday is bubbling with oil as usual, being sober temporarily. Roane is dashing about to beauty parlors, also as usual, and fretting at the delays on the Little House. And I am getting back to the grind right this minute, and hoping meantime, that you really are not ill, and that we hear from you soon.

As ever, Mary

1093

I make the most of this sheet, since a third one might be rather too fat for regular postage.

The big bad wolf referred to in the letter on the reverse is "can's brother, Jim Lemming.

The house referred to is a small one on Beverly which has been fixed up for picnics, etc.

Of course you know Ferriday's identity, and Brent is the husband of Maone's niece.

Alice, of course, is Alice Walworth, - and I can't recall if there are other characters, but if so, they are probably minor.

It is sweet of you to think of Clemence in regard to illustrations that might serve her. She would welcome seeing them as she probably has never had an opportunity to see pictures at all, save the few hanging hereabouts. For a while, - until she got a definite start, I thought it well to let her work out a mode of self expression. Now that that is definitely established I think it would give her a flock of ideas, and even though she might copy some at first, - alas! - in the end she will hit her own method, now that it is definitely established. She was delighted when I scouted the idea to her, and she will be grateful indeed.

I was amused at what you had to say regarding la Grignan. I can just about picture her letters. Long has she worked her especial victim with the theory that everyone is the world was jealous of her, and for 30 years has put that over, and will go on doing so, now that the mind is sagging a bit. In reality, no one is jealous of her or ever was, but on the other hand, every one is disgusted the way she wilfully wrecks her victim just to satisfy her own frightfully selfish ends.

Coming back to old Mr. Chase, - if old Mr. Rosenwald comes through, I shall be able to spend quite a bit of time in Natchez, where I shall work on the item in question with Mr. Martin. At the same time, I want to work with him on the Scrapbook iteda too. Mrs. Martin will be splendid for the Chase material, as his sister married Mr. Chase's son, and accordingly all particulars regarding the family, - invaluable for annotations, is at his finger tips.

Well, tomorrow I must go, and so there will be a break. I am so glad you are going to have a little time all by yourself, and may Chicago not hurry to get back to New York. At the Meade Villa, I shall not be alone, for together we shall in spirit explore a couple of tomorrows.

...

...

1094

1094

February 5th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Home again, and delighted withal to be within touch of a typewriter, putting me in touch with all that really matters.

The trip turned out entirely different from what was originally conceived. I was disappointed on the pre-conceived points I had formulated before getting into the big road, but delighted with unforeseen circumstances that came to the surface while I was traveling up and down the Mississippi Valley.

To get right to the point, L. S. U. Press will not publish the Scrapbook this year. I regretted that influenza had stricken some of the members of the Board, and that the others were hesitant.

James has been bidden to Oklahoma for a conference on several points. This is to transpire within the next two or three weeks, I believe. I suggested he take the Fabulous 52 with him to tell them what that item is about in the event they should not understand it any more than others who have seen it.

The Scrapbook is the type of thing they might do nicely, but I have recommended that that be forwarded to Bobs-Merrill without delay, feeling that if they are interested, it might be well to have a couple of things cooking outside Oklahoma.

The latter institution wrote a very flattering letter about the text of one of the folk lore things, suggesting certain changes, but remarking at the same time that with these slight alterations, it might well bid to be one of the more interesting publications of the year, - they referred to it as "Probably an American Aesop".

I had a good evening with Essae Mae. James was invited, as was Miss C.'s secretary and one of her chief lieutenants, whom Mr. Pipes had known in Concordia Parish for a number of years. For the most part, Mr. Pipes sat on their side of the drawing room while Madam Essae Mae and I held down a sofa opposite. Following dinner, we had a long chat, for the most part exploring the possible moves to be made relative to the Department of Documents, etc. The social bond was cemented and I think we made reasonable progress on the pet project. Nothing concrete is possible at the moment, but there is satisfaction to know things are stewing.

(over)

1095

In Natchez, I had three prolonged sittings with Miss Nellie Brandon. I had hoped that she might get out to "Leade Villa with me, but her heart was acting up and she wasn't able to get out of doors. Naturally I went out by myself and did a lot of looking around. I liked the place ever so much, and saw it through re-constructed plans. The little bayou to the right of the house holds a lot of possibilities, and the 40 acres behind the house promises much. The oil business in that particular area is dying out, I believe, so that eventually prices on real estate will return to normal. I had somewhat forgotten the two-story brick kitchen behind the house, - formerly connected with the main house by covered gallery. I liked that so much, even though it was in imperfect condition. All in all, my opinion was confirmed that it will certainly be a delicious place, although at the moment it does seem a little barren. I have made up my mind that what it needs most is magnolias, live oaks, camelias, gardenias and butterfly lilies, and once some of those things get going, it will really be a hermitage of delight.

I ran out to see Miss Myra one afternoon. She was on the verge of putting in a lot of camelias and wanted my advise. I was glad I went when I did. The holes were all dug, but they were re-filled, and I laid out a formal gardenia garden and a camelia garden which I think is going to be quite nice.

I remained for supper, walking back to town at 9 p.m., declining her expressed wish that I would let her drive me in.

Back in town, I listened to some very interesting manuscripts which gave me a couple of swell ideas for sunsequent use in a manner I shall touch upon later.

Old Miss Corinne Henderson's sister, Mrs. Florence Kelly, - no kin to the Melrose Kellys, - gave me some valuable papers on Carmel Church, - hard by Mantua, - and they contain some very pertinent particulars regarding the ante bellum aspect of the neighborhood, - the various communicants of Carmel, - both white and colored, in pre Confederate days, and all this with other items I picked up further convinces me that the Chase Diary is really going to do some things for us.

In Baton Rouge, Miss Culver told me of a lady who does some things for life, who is currently in South Louisiana, but who plans to visit her the latter part of this month. Hesitantly she asked if I thought she might bring her to Melrose. I said By All Means, - for I shall get her to do the mulatto department, - which should be good for the Rosenwald department, - and I shall let her "discover" Clemence, which will do no harm, and might lend some publicity to her illustrations in the Oklahoma program, should she be struck by her form of expression.

1096

On my return from Natchez, I was delighted to discover that one of my friends, - Jack also, whose real name is Vernon Williams, - had procured some Chinese or Peikin geese from Minnesota. Jack is a swell guy, tall, thin and more suggests a cocoa rendition of Tut-ank-ahem, - or however, than anyone I can think of. He has three or four children, - one or two of whom are disturbingly light, although Jack is more or less negro I think. Jack has had in mind to do something about Chinese geese for ever so long, for they are pretty and look more like swan than any other type of goose. They lay eggs with abandon, usually three times as many as they can hatch, and I think Jack hopes that I can get some of my fine feathered friends to interest themselves in his product. I think I can. I might say in passing that the Chinese goose has a curious little round comb on the top of his head which somehow suggests a crown, and accordingly looks almost twice as royal, - if not as regal as a swan. Jack is taking care of the geese, having made a pen for them that gives on Cane River but restrains them from wandering afield, and already he envisions crossing the Chinese geese with the African grays, - in order to get something that will be mulatto in swiftness but enormous in weight. I am supposed to be a silent partner in all this business, and it will certainly be a pleasure for me to recommend them to such people as the Rands of Alexandria who have a camp on Catahoula Lake, and to people in Natchez who really ought to have something rand that floats on the water and nicely balances the elegance of their imposing porticoes.

On returning here, I was delighted to discover that the Madam was ever so much improved. I think Stephen's visit gave her a new lease on life, and I am providing her with plenty of stuff to look into, - by way of old papers and things, which will take up the slack time which weighs heavily upon her otherwise. She remains upstairs, which is as well for the moment.

While in Natchez, I also ran across several manuscripts of a contemporary vintage which dealt with the general race question, but which approaches it in a slightly different angle and with a much more positive view point. These are of merit, have received approbation by good houses, - Atlantic Monthly Editor, etc., but have not gone into print because of the hesitancy on the part of houses, - MacMillan is one in point, - because of the uncertainty as to public re-action to such subject matter. It occurs to me that with a statement of approval on the part of reputable publishers, - old Rosenwald might under-write one or two of these items, - say 3 or 5 thousand, - for they some times do purchase that many copies of an item, - and this would enable the publisher to go ahead, with the guarantee that he will loose nothing, - and then, once it has appeared in print, - the novel itself may find its own level on the general market. I shall keep this up my sleeve as something to work on

(over)

3001

1097

Chicago, once other matter I have in mind are out of the way.

At the same time, - that is while in Natchez, I found some one to do some very difficult work for me in the line of a short story which unravelled in my mind as I whisked through St. Catherine's street, - the negro street of Natchez. I have an idea for a short story which I cannot, - thanks to physical drawbacks, hit off by myself, and so I am toying with the idea of getting a strong arm in that neighborhood to assist me in the matter. I am doing a rough outline within a day or two, and sending it along to be filled in and expanded. I think the idea a good one, and shall pass it along to you in a subsequent report.

Naturally I am pressed for time at the moment, what with a lot of things jammed up here during my absence. But I did want you to have this preliminary report immediately, even though it be sketchy, and I shall take up individual points at later sittings.

In fine, the U. S. U. Press affair is temporarily out of consideration for this season. It did give me an opportunity to cover several other matters with the members of the staff not down sick, and the knowledge of their opinions and wants will offer me much when I get hold of Mr. Martin a little later in the Spring, I hope.

As soon as I know about la belle Culver's intention to head this way with the Life Department, I shall then formulate my plans for touching at Natchez again to further some of the projects to hand. I reckon that might be in March, - say about the middle, or possibly the last of the month of March.

In the mean time I am going ahead as best I can, accumulating the stuff at hand, so that I may have it at my finger tips when an opportunity presents itself.

I am sorry I came home with nothing more concrete than I did, but I find that the contacts I made, both personal and mental, are likely to serve us well, and so, from that point of view, the money was well invested.

I must fold this up at this point and get it going. But not before saying how grateful I am for the opportunity of having made the round, and now that I am back, for the opportunity of establishing the contact again via post that means so much.

3001

1098
Natchez

February 6th, 1945.

Memorandum for Clipping Service:

I am certainly ashamed of myself for letting so much time go by since my last report.

As a matter of fact, the gardening department got out of hand, and as three or four dusky gardeners are awaiting words of wisdom and direction from me, in the Madam's remote situation in her room, I have given more attention to the trimming, cutting, transplanting, etc., than to setting down the conversations I have been holding in my mind with one who is no doubt catching the remarks, even they be but of a spiritual nature.

I haven't done any correspondence for myself since my return, save the one report sent forward a day or two ago. There were a few "must" letters of a business nature for the Madam, but they represent the sum and substance of my efforts on this keyboard.

Lots of times I would gladly have deserted the gardens for the typewriter, but sometimes, when trimming and fixing be-clouds the understanding of the actual workers, I am unable to do much concentrating on any line, save the Chinese magnolia or crepe myrtle front. Yesterday I started a report, but before I had done the first paragraph I was interrupted and discovered, on inspection, that one of the helpers, - expert in trimming a crepe myrtle down to nothing, - which is usually not harmful to the tree, - for the bushes at the top put out flowers proportionately large in size as the size of the limbs are reduced, - had mistaken a persimmon tree for a crepe myrtle, and had whittled it down to about nothing.

Well, that is that, but I shall be able to get back to correspondence shortly without the disturbing element of wonder hanging over me as I desert one job in the open for the blessings that come with communion with one who matters.

(Over)

2801

1099

During my busy stay in Natchez, I found no time to accept an invitation to chicken dinner at Bedford Plantation, near Cannonsburg, with friends there who had invited Mr. and Mrs. Audley Conner and me to break bread with them. Cannonsburg is to the North East of Natchez, - possibly 15 miles, and the lady who invited us is the granddaughter of Thomas Hall, one time overseer for the Estate of Stephen Minor of Concord, - and later Planter in his own right, - that is Mr. Hall. You may recall that it was he, - extremely intelligent but not very learned in books, who recognized the extraordinary brilliance of mind in Sargent Prentiss, and who provided him the money to study law. B. L. C. Wailes reported Mr. Hall as the "finest planter in Adams County in 1856".

Well, all this, and merely to say that although I didn't go out with the Sheriff, I did drop by to see him for a moment at his office in the Court House, and while there he told me a rather amusing story of what had come to his attention at Christmas time.

It seems that a few days before the 25th of December, a colored gentleman, living in the St. Catherine Street locality, had several times attempted to call on a colored lady in the neighborhood who had refused to let him come in to call, although he had frequently knocked on her door. Finally, on Christmas Eve, and dressed in his Sunday clothes, he decided to surprise the lady, and accordingly climbed to her roof top by some means and let himself down her chimney. His progress was orderly at first, for he descended slowly by pressing his knees against the sides of the chimney, supplementing the support of his weight by pressing his hands, against the sides of the chimney, too.

About half way down, it developed that the chimney got smaller, and the first thing the colored gentleman knew, he was wedged in, and couldn't get either down or up. He accordingly began screaming and yelling, and the lady in the house, hearing the noise, peaked up the chimney, saw his feet, and thought she would teach him a lesson by starting a big old smokey fire in the fireplace. Well, with the chimney stopped up, the billows of smoke did not go up, but rather came out into the room, and before she knew it, she had to fly out doors.

Mad, and determined to teach the gentleman a lesson, she telephoned the Sheriff, whose arrival, with deputies, brought forth dozens of colored neighbors.

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But the Sheriff could neither reach the man from the top of the chimney, nor getting get anything up from the bottom to push him out. It looked as though the chimney would have to be torn down, when someone thought of summoning the Fire Department. The arrival of the engines swelled the number of colored on-lookers to hundreds. Eventually a long pole with a big hook on the end, grappled with the collar of the gentleman's coat, and with great trouble, he was hauled up out of his wedged situation.

Naturally, all this delighted the colored folks, and roars of applause went up from the crowds.

Audley admonished the man for attempting unlawful entry, but the gentleman explained that he merely "wanted to play Santa Claus to the lady".

As Audley put it: - "Now what can you do with a man like that? Besides, I figured that the imposing audience would effect much more influence on the man than any arrest that might carry out."

And so he advised the intruder against a repetition, and returned home. A couple of weeks later, he saw the man of the street. The latter came up to him and said:

"Mr. Sheriff Boss, I sure had to git out of that there St. Catherine Street place. - Everytime on Saturday night when I'd try to go to the saloon to spend a nice evening, everytime I'd stick my head in the place, all the folks would just roar at me and made me so shame faced, I just jus' took my stuff and moved to another place as far away from them all as I could git."

And that's all of that endless tale, which isn't very funny, but rather nice, I think, especially as it gives you some idea of Audley and why the negroes say that if they could only vote and Mr. Audley would only run for Governor, they sure would put him in the Office of Governor.

The "adam continues to bend, - or rather mend, but slowly.

She was delighted to have your nice letter in yesterday's post, and was of course glad that you liked the shawl so much. The 3 clippings meant a lot to her, too, and the colored cotton item from Russia pleased her no end. Realizing how busy you are, she seems quite accustomed to thinking that letters are difficult to write, and therefore never seems to realize that ones not addressed to her come this way.

0011

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I had one or two letters of interest, but seem to have misplaced them momentarily so I shall merely enclose a couple of no interest, save for the flavor of how things run in the post when nothing much is stirring.

The one from Joe Henry, as I recall, is of no interest, and the one from Caroline is merely interesting as being typical. If you will destroy them both, it will be alright as I don't need them.

A letter from General Stephen's aid to the Madam refers to a letter I wrote him some months ago, and says he is aving it forever as a fine example of something or other. It is curious, but I don't recall that I did more than mention the state of the Madam's health, but I probably made a couple of errors that made the thing curious. I am supposed to knock off three letters to wandering Henrys today, but I shall never make it, - nor shall I get this in the mail, unless I fly right now.

There is so much to be written, - to be dismissed, that I am praying for a rain to knock gardening out of commission so we can get on with more important things.....

8011

1102

February 10th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It's a curious thing, but I am still a little off center from surprise that L. S. U. Press didn't lay hold firmly on the Scrapbook. I guess I must have mistaken James' report as to the first reaction on the part of the President of the Board as something that was almost an accomplished fact.

A determination to bring the thing into publication has impelled me to recommend that it go forward immediately to Bobs Merrill, and shipment of the manuscript has already been made. Several other items will be submitted to Oklahoma when James runs up there later in the month, - I imagine about the 15th or 20th.

It occurs to me that in line with the manuscripts by others who have written things on the negro which, for some reason, might not be subscribed to by a publisher, unless written by old Mr. Rosenwald, it might be a good idea to have some of the items, as illustrated by Clemence, wrapped up neatly in cellophane when la Haygood arrives at this point. I think I shall write James today, asking him to send some of these manuscripts so that I may casually toss these into the lady's lap when she arrives.

As much might be said for the data on the Prince of Gallon and Eliza Greenfield, - "the Black Swan". I enumerate all these things, not so much by way of reporting something new, as to keep you abreast with what goes on in the section devoted to plans for the impending 60 days. Come to think of it, however, la Haygood threatened, as I recall, to be here a little before Easter, and I guess that is less than 60 days away. I must begin getting things arranged.

The Madam continues to improve slowly, - although she hates to admit it. Yesterday she went through some old manuscripts, and chanced to mention that she found a letter of 1839, signed by Washington Jackson. I appropriated that one. Mr. W. Jackson was the junior partner of Todd, Jackson and Company of Liverpool. His American office was in New Orleans. He married Anna Mercer Cartwright, daughter of old Dr. Cartwright of "atchez, the lady being the name sake of Mrs. William Newton Mercer. It is Anna Mercer Cartwright whom Alice Walworth is using as the central figure of the novel on which she has been working for some time. Alice's sister, Mary Whitaker of Baton Rouge,

(over)

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might also be interested in this original letter, as Mr. and Mrs. Washington Jackson were great aunt and uncle to the ladies Walworth.

Now Mary has a wonderful diary kept by one William Gordon, their grandfather, who married Mrs. Audubon's sister. The diary is dated about 1804, and records Mr. Gordon's arrival in Louisiana, and enumerates the places he stopped off, during his visit with Abijah Hunt, on their way up to Natchez from New Orleans. Abijah Hunt is or was the uncle of David Hunt, the famous Natchez planter, builder of Homewood, Landsdowne, Woodlawn, etc. No one knows much of anything about Abijah, who was killed in a duel in Natchez by George Poindexter about 1810, when David Hunt became his heir.

I think I shall use the Washington Jackson letter as a means of prying loose the Gordon diary from the sisters Walworth, and so things turn.

Up to the present, no one has seen the Gordon diary, although it was eagerly sought after by Stanley Arthur when he was writing his life of Audubon. Yhrtr str some rather confidential things in the diary, - for instance, I recall one paragraph wherein Mr. Gordon sets down the fact that in coming (one mm would be enough) up the Mississippi, he and Mr. Hunt stopped off at a fine plantation house, - mulatto, - to spend the night. They were very kindly housed, and Mr. Hunt was greatly attracted to a pretty daughter of the family. He subsequently asked his mulatto host if he might not take the girl "under his protection", on departing the next morning. That might cause something of a ripple among the distinguished Hunt heirs. Because of the confidential entries, however, the diary has never been outside the family, but I consider it a historic document, and am hoping, - with the aid of the Jackson letter, - to be able to do something about making a transcript. We shall eventually see.

From what little I have heard regarding conversations here during the recent visit of the eldest son, it seems that he was most pleasantly impressed by his host in his recent visit to Warm Springs. The fact which impressed him most, it was said, was the good humor and jocular mood of Mr. Big. It seems that the President rolled himself into his office, unassisted, and got up from his wheel chair to the chair before his desk without any help at all. As the two men chatted, the President was continually throwing a light vein on the official papers he had to sign, - claims against the Army, etc., and altogether the General came away feeling that his host was even more remarkable in his unusual possession of a sense of proportion and humour than he had supposed, although he had long been an admirer.

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I have a couple of people awaiting my guiding hand, and I must get going shortly. In spite of the storms, sleet, snow and whatnot that are inundating your neighborhood, according to current radio reports, we seem to be basking in an early Spring sun. Pear trees are starting to bloom. Altheas are putting out tender green leaves. The Chinese honeysuckle bushes freight the air with fragrance. The jonquills are replacing the narcissus and the hyacinths are equally in flower. Sap is beginning to climb up into the fig and oaks, and if I do not keep the trimmers going strong, spring will have out-distanced us in our race against time.

It is a great pleasure to labor on these items, as each, like persons, has an individuality all his own. And of course they seldom if ever talk back, no matter how much one pushes them about. Then, too, they afford a lot of opportunity for one to do some thinking and planning as one tries to get things going a little better for them, and that is always a pleasure, too.

There were a couple of other things I wanted to mention, but I shall have to side track them for the moment and get on about the garden department. Somehow there is a double joy in such labors, - not only for the immediate satisfaction of giving the trees and things a chance, but to see in all this a pattern of gardening to be brought into flower in the environs of "eade Villa eventually.....

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1105

February 12th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To hand is your letter, written during my absence,
and it means more than I can say.

As you may or may not have noticed, the reports following my return here, have been characterized by a somewhat unsettled feeling, making them entirely unsatisfactory. I somehow felt that there was some terrific demands m being made upon you, and with that coursing through my heart, I seemed quite incapable of expressing myself with the usual clarity. Now that I understand how your time and your energies must be drained by the good work that takes you back and forth to Brooklyn, following your busy days at the office, I understand why I felt so unsettled. I don't know how one takes care of one's self at such times, but if there be a way, I hope you find it.

I am terribly sorry to learn of the grave illness, and I do hope it may not be over a prolonged period. After all, the kindest thing in such cases is to hope for a release from or for the poor victim. Surely, under the circumstances, the hospital is the place, for there drugs may be administered that will numb the sense of suffering, and her departure will be the easier, - and equally important, the health of those who remain will not be impaired.

Is it Uncle Andy of whom you speak? I recall your having mentioned him several times, and am wondering if it can be the same person whose wife is having to go through such a trying ordeal. It is good of you, - characteristically good of you, to take the position you do in regard to this matter and its sequence. Surely something will turn as you would have it before long, and the the results may be more satisfactory than appear at first. In connection with this, I am wondering if your brother ever married. That romance was so unexpected, I am wondering how it turned out.

The enclosed letters came to hand to day, and I send them along to keep you in touch with how things turn in that department. Relative to Bobbs "errill, I thought it well to try them on the Scrapbook while Oklahoma is considering the other items. Should Bobbs "errill decide unfavorably then the Scrapbook could be submitted to Klahoma, and by the submission time arrived, they would be done with the current manuscripts, - either by rejection or by printing. (Over)

1106

I am glad you found the prospectus to Rosenwal alright. It is the only one I have and I should be glad if you would keep it, as it is the sort of thing that I like to share only with you. I can't imagine ever having need for it, but should I, I could always ask if I might borrow it. Sometime I should like to know just how that Foundation operates, for if I could understand its functioning characteristics, I might be able to sell them a lot of projects. I have half a dozen up my sleeve, but shall expose them for inspection but one at a time, with the first one brought out for consideration only after I make the first personal contact with la belle Haygood.

I am delighted with the illustrations which came to hand a few days back. They are elegant, and I shall be looking for life any moment. I have so much enjoyed the copy you sent showing so many interesting studies of Mrs. Roosevelt's hands, and I never tire turning through these things, as it is about the only companionship I have before bed time.

A note from Mary Rhodes says thanks for the boost I gave her when I was in Natchez. With no one who understood her point of view, with a sick husband to support, with a raft of grandchildren in New Orleans and somewhere in Shreveport to claim certain distracting thoughts, etc., etc., her writing languished. But now she appears, - or at least declares that she has the courage of conviction that someone might be interested in her novel, and is working from two to three hours nightly on it, - after coming home from the office. She works for the Federal Public Welfare agency. The title of her novel is "One Small Candle", based on the assumption that one small light in the negro world may set a lot of pilgrims straight on their journey through life. - I think I had mentioned a story to her of how one unimportant person's little candle was the fire from which a great beautiful Cathedral tower was set aglow, and she selected the idea for the title.

To be perfectly frank, I don't find myself to fond of Mary Rhodes socially. It may be because she is a little cross, worn out, probably, by her many labors. But I admire her viewpoint on the negro question and her ability to set down her sense of justice on paper, and I shall continue to do all the boosting I can. Curiously enough, years ago before Lyle wrote Children Of Strangers, she acted as his secretary in New Orleans. As his light fades, it would be nice if her little candle would flame.

Because of the enclosures, I shall confine myself to this single page. I am grateful to you for having advised me of the current demands on your time and strength. Just knowing what made me uneasy - without sensing the actual fact, makes everything seem so much better. I shall be thinking of you from day to day, - especially when day is done, and hoping that everything may work around toward rest and some care of yourself soon...

1107

February 15th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Of necessity, this must be a brief memorandum, for 14 darkeys are milling around on my front gallery, awaiting what strange ideas I may have for them to undertake today by way of labor.

Since Sunday night, the Madam has been in bed. It is said her blood count is down. She suffers from exhaustion, brought on by too much exercise, in company with her son in law physician and her daughter last Sunday. As usual, they have the fun of wearing her out, and I am left holding the bag, so to speak, until they make another round about the end of the week.

I undertook a new garden, - mostly lawn, which will double the space around the residence of J. A. Henry, the Madam's son, who live next door.

Yesterday things were going full tilt and today's program will be much the same, I reckon. J. H. is in Baton Rouge or some such place, and so the Melrose gardens plus the J. A. Henry gardens fall to me to maintain and to create. I like it, what with plenty of help, but usually just the Melrose gardens are enough.

In the latter, I have Mitchell, the expert Axe, as chief deputy. Peter Baptiste, is his assistant. Bill Bocque is pushing a wheelbarrow about, hauling cotton hull fertilizer. Dave Rachel is cleaning out grass from the smaller pear trees and the magnolias. Bud Williams is working on the iris. Pany (Octave) Conti is supervising the construction of a gateway and cattle gap, leading from the new garden to the Bermuda (Cote Joyeuse) Road. Levy Williams, Elam Brown, Henry Earle Solomon, and one or two, - I should say two or three others, are helping too.

Yank Dudley is digging holes for crepe myrtles and altheas and nandina. Billy porter is digging out stumps. Fugabou is running a tractor to pull dirt into the low places while Jack and Ezra are supervising the transplanting of an oak which is probably too large to survive such an operation.

I enumerate these names, for somehow like plantations, the mere mention of the Mithers and the Joes give a certain

1108

flavor to the business.

A letter to hand from James, tentatively setting down his immediate plans.

I think he will dispose of his furniture in Baton Rouge, and run up to Norman, Oklahoma, before the end of the current month. This will give him an opportunity to spend some time with the Oklahoma Press, and, - I hope, - put through a couple of books. In the mean time, old Rosenwald will have acted upon his application for a second grant, and when the decision is announced, he will formulate his plans accordingly. What he wants to do is to take up his residence somewhere in the Cane River country, I believe.

Somehow I have a feeling that he will not get a re-grant, although I could be, and I do hope, I am wrong. Somehow I have a feeling, however, that one H. Lane, who spent some time with la Ellis Avenue when she was in New Orleans, may have put a spoke in the wheels for Mr. P., although that is merely intuitive on my part.

I was tired last night at folding up time. My day had been quite full, - 5:30 a.m., straight through, with only an hour at noon time to sit with the Madam for a little chat and occasional little visits in between major operations. Naturally she wants to have me come by and see her. I understand that, but I must say I would do better to take half an hour out at noon. At eight, I started to fold up my beard, but discovered my mind was too busy; and somehow the heart, too, was traveling the ether waves, and I thought constantly of another who was having too busy days, too.

Well, although weary, I figured some communion with the stars would be better, and so I dressed and took to the Cane River road. It was a marvelous night, - too warm to wear anything more than my work clothes, - no coat. There was a thin moon and a big bright star, and the slenderness of the moon in no way blotted out the brilliance of the stars which formed ever so pretty patterns on the smooth surface of Cane River.

At 11, I came home, thoroughly tired, but a little less unsettled, and I slept mightily.

Much laughter and chatter still goes on along my front gallery. I must skip along, but I'll be back shortly.

1109

2/17
Saturday Night.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

This is a curious time for me to be writing. It is rather dark outside, and sprinkling a little. The hour is 8:30. The big house is in darkness. There are lights at J. H.'s across the fence through the bamboo from the big house. The garage is closed and all the niggers are up the road a mile or so, where in a tent they have movies on Sunday nights, Friday nights and Saturday nights.

The airdale, Texas, whom I call Dora, has just accompanied me to the bridge and back, and what with a decorative fire going in my fireplace and a lot of quiet, it looks like a good time for me to say thanks for the fine report, coming to hand this afternoon. The mail really arrives about 9, but Mr. Bachelier has been here for two or three days, and this morning I started him back to his farm on Little River down Clouteriville way, and the balance of the time up until 4, I devoted to my patient whose mind wandered a little and who obviously needed consolation.

First off, I want to thank you for telling me so completely of how things turn in your office. As though things hadn't been wearing enough on the family front without having to go through a rumpus at business. But as you indicated, it no doubt did Herr Direktor good to clear the atmosphere a little, for it would appear that he is one who must have a few facts drummed into his skull since he apparently can't get another viewpoint without a thorough drubbing. It is nice to have the present address, but if he doesn't behave, one can always find other means of communication.

I am so glad you have thought through another means of maintaining the contact, and I think your suggestion a fine one in the event we should ever have to exchange the present 810 for a box number. Quite frankly I feel the easy flow of reports must always be maintained as an assured thing, for without it, I think we should both feel terribly alone in the world. Isn't curious what security one feels if one knows that at least one soul exists in this world, one who understands all, and who, by merely being within reach of the post, makes everything in life assume a value that is genuine and good. Without that feeling, life certainly would be drab, while in possession of it, everything somehow seems so precious.

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Last night I went to my barber. I was tired after working pretty busily all day, plus entertaining Mr. Bachelier as I labored, breaking off only long enough to try to cheer up my patient a bit. Jack, the barber, ought to have been tired, too, for he had been running a tractor all day. But he seemed just as fresh as at dawn, and the six other niggers who came to be shorn while I was being sheared, didn't seem to set him back much. His illumination is two kerosene lamps on a table, with the victim sitting in an ordinary straight back chair. As Jack is tall, this means he has to double up pretty much, but he makes it very nicely. His wife and two or three of his children were playing about, - the children not the wife, and somehow the domesticity was mellow and our general conversation of Cane River personalities, of strange doings of guinea hens, turkeys, etc., seemed refreshing. Jack told me "our children", - the Chinese geese - were doing nicely and he took me out in the moonlight to see the fine chicken yard he had made from their little shack down to the river. He confided to me that they had laid two eggs in the past two days, and would probably keep up that daily doings for the next thirty, so it looks as though we should have grandchildren by the middle of April. His brother Ezra, has already secured some great African geese, and eventually we shall see what kind of mulattoes we may stir up. I may accept a pair of the young Chinese ones for myself, naming them something Chinese with a Louisiana twist. Eventually, one might establish some water in the bayou hard by Meade Villa, and certainly a pair of Chinese geese would look elegant there and at the same time delight the soul of the departed B. L. C., slumbering on the far side of the property in the family graveyard.

And speaking of Meade Villa, I would acknowledge the receipt of the photograph and am inserting it in the Sydnor book. I had not expected it this year or next, but had merely recommended that eventually it go in that volume. I hope you didn't hurry it along.

And speaking of the Wailes department, reminds me that earlier this week I had a brief note from Miss Nellie, saying she was leaving for Fort Gibson to spend a day or two with her sister in law whose son, Covington Wailes, had just been killed in the Pacific. He was her favorite nephew and I'm afraid she will not take his death easily, noble though she be.

6911

1111

With the drizzle that started this morning, my latest fling at gardening somehow seems to be receiving the blessings of heaven, for I finished all the planting I am going to do momentarily in that development, and the moisture should do a lot to perk up the larger altheas, crepe myrtles and nandina which have figured exclusively in my current efforts.

In appropriating this section of land, I cut a vegetable garden in half, and where once sweet potatoes grew, albeit somewhat indifferently, thanks to the shade, one now seems or rather see nothing but a prospective greensward, and what a splendid pelouse it will be. A fairly good sized live oak centers the thing, and a few pecaness will add their shade shortly. Two new drives were laid out, - one on a curve and the other in a straight line, and the whole of the latter two items is bordered with the above described stuff. The altheas (possibly spelled althias) will give a nice lot of white, pink and purple blossoms during April through September. The crepe myrtle will do a 90 day spread from the first of June, - water mellow red and white, while the nandina (heavenly Bamboo) will give green, with magnificent clusters of red red berries throughout the autumn, winter and spring months, so there will be color all the year, - and just enough to set off the big lawn dominating the lay out. A new wire fence has replaced the high garden fence, while a tractor was disking up the grounds and smoothing them off.

I have now turned this section over to the care of the elements and who ever may push a lawn mower, and shall devote myself this coming week to the garden lying along Cane River, - between it and the road running in front of the "elrose gardens. I already have 25 or 30 camelia japonicas along the ridge where the bank drops abruptly some 10 or 15 feet to the margin of the river. Gread Oaks shelter this spot from the intense sun while the excellence of the drainage at this point, plus the dampness from the river appears to be making what is already planted do rather well. A meandering cow some weeks back got into the place and pretty well defoliated the camelias, but they are putting out a new set of leaves and appear none the worse for wear.

This place has always been unsightly because of two ancient garages that have disfigured the spot, but J. H. appears so enthused over the job adjoining his house that after a little prodding, he has expressed himself as disgruntled by the appearance of the garages, and has told me I can move them where ever I choose. He has even gone further

1112

to ask if we couldn't stand some more and larger camellias on the bank. We could. And so this coming week I shall be slaughtering a flock of extraaneous trees still cluttering up a section of the bank, and when the garages come down, - lo! there will be a rather nice developement. So things go in these parts, and I am glad of the out door exercise, since under present conditions, I can do little work on this machine, what with no reader to tell me where I am at. Then, if old Mr. Rosenwald come across, I shall have a lot of vim and vigor and so e money to go to "atoyez with my manuscript to do some finishing touches on it with Mr. Martin's good help.

I listen nightly to the weather reports emanating from your locality, and I am floored by the accounts of the weather. To put it mildly, New York must be a mess, what with layer upon layer and more to come.

During this past week while the nirth has been contending with temperatures hovering around zero, it has been much too warm here to wear anything save usual kaki shirts and pants. Even at night, while taking my walk to the spillway or the bridge, I have worn no coat. The pear trees are in full bloom, as are the Chinese magnolias and the forsythia. If I could only bounce some of this in your direction! But what will eventually be better will transpire when you journey this way to share some of this climate. I reckon snow is alright but I could be just as glad if I never saw any again. Somehow, what with contemporary ventilation, refrigeration, etc., I think the South is bound to appeal more than ever to lots of people who formerly were mindful of its summers. When I really want to have fun, I take time out to picture how that wing of Meade Villa, as shown in the photograph, might be equipped with electric fans for summer, butaine gas for winter, etc., etc., for that ought to be la Pavillion de Madame, it is pleasant to think how it may eventually be laid out and how cosy and secure one might find one's self situated therein.

But this letter seems to be so long thatthere is really no end to it, - as in truth there is, since I shall go writing along in my mind when I have left off pushing this machine. There are a flock of other points I should have touched upon at this sitting, but I shall let them slide until my next. In the mean time, don't try to do other than send mental reports, for conservation of energy is the order of the day until things in Brookly get settled down and things in the office operate a little more smoothly. I think you know I will understand alright and if the typed word doesn't come to hand, I shall be realizing that the communication is there nevertheless....So please go as slowly as you can and grab off some rest as you may....

1113

February 23rd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I am behind in my correspondence.

During the past ten days, the Madam has been in bed, - first from indigestion, and then when that was about patched up, a cold and sore throat. Just to make it good, I developed some sort of a cold, which centered in the intestinal department, and so crawled about at a decidedly reduced speed for a few days.

But now I appear to be alright again and my patient is getting along alright, and her cold seems about gone. Before she gets back on her feet, I am sure she will have to go to a Nursing Home for a few weeks, but she will have to get a little sicker before she will consent to go out the front gate.

I believe her daughter is pregnant again. She usually goes to the hospital at the inception of such business, and she was there for a few days last week. The Madam always appears remarkably indifferent to such things.

When the Madam's cold developed a few evenings back, I telephoned her son in law. He said he would respond without delay. His wife got on the wire, and asked me why her brother didn't call a Matchitoches physician. That is because she was made in December because another physician was called in for consultation during her Mother's influenza. I told her I didn't know. That I was delivering a message on the Madam's behalf and wanted merely a yes or no as to whether a professional call would be made. Later the Madam asked me what Sister said. I told her, - and the Madam was as mad as a wet hen. Yesterday she say her daughter, who came by for a short call. She jumped on her and told her not to dare speak to me in such a manner again. The daughter flew out in a rage. I reckon I shall have a round about Sunday when the crowd blows in, - as usual. - That's the local scene on its more drab side. But there are other and more agreeable angles, and the shadowy ones I dismiss from my mind.

(over)

1114

J. H. Henry had his brother, Paynie, living in Natchitoches, purchase a number of fine japonicas in South Louisiana the other day when Payne was down that way. There are pink ones, red and white. I have set them out on the ridge overlooking Cane River, and added to those already growing there, they really look quite nice. That location is ideal, for it is pretty, to begin with. And then it has excellent drainage, which is very important, since camellias don't like to have their feet in water. Then too there are several live oaks on the banks, and these provide a shade through which the sun merely filters, and camellias can't stand too intense heat. But more important than these considerations is the fact that while the gardening looks fairly well, it does more than please the eye, for it appears to be awakening a positive interest in gardening on the part of J. H. Henry, - a whiz at business and money making, but heretofore rather indifferent to planting of non-productive items. Gradually this new interest appears to be awakening and I sometimes shudder at the possibilities, for with the money he controls, plus the labor at his disposal, nothing in Louisiana would be safe if he ever took a page from his Mother and began planting everywhere he could find an inch of ground.

An interruption of several hours intervenes at this point, and as it approaches time for the post man, I shall put this in the mail herewith. I enclose a few letters from James which may or may not include particulars of interest. I was glad to note that he got the Scrapbook off to Bobbs Merrill, although the lady he communicated with is not the one I had in mind, but I reckon it makes very little difference.

Shall do better at my next sitting, I hope.

We appear to be in full spring, and a robin is singing madly on my picket fence at this moment. Robins usually do not stay here in the summer, and so I reckon this one is heading in your general direction. I hope a couple of bluebirds are making the same trip....

1115

February 25th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The Spring weather persists in these parts, and I hope a big old thaw in your neighborhood is whisking the vestments of Winter away.

We had quite a busy week. The Madam continues in her bed, - weak from lack of food and further pulled down by a cold. Today a nurse is coming, - whose name of all things for a nurse, is none other than Miss Pickle.

Save for general exhaustion and the cold, there appears to be nothing else wrong with the Madam, organically. A couple of weeks of nursing, and I think she will be up and about. There is an attempt being made to get her up to Virginia to stay with the General this summer, - or at least to visit him a little and thence on to North Carolina, in the Ashville neighborhood, but that is merely a hope, and will be difficult to engineer. She of course knows nothing of this, and it may or may not transpire.

Aside from lending what aid and comfort I can, plus stirring up an occasional egg-nog for her and generally trying to keep her in not too depressed a state, I have been gardening pretty thoroughly this week too.

I made another parterre, - or rather completed one already laid out more or less vaguely. Most of the planting centered around putting out a nandina hedge, - Heavenly Bamboo, it is sometimes called. A bush that in these parts grows about 6 or 8 feet tall, and has luscious red berries all during the winter. I transplanted some rather large althias and crepe myrtles, too, and generally removed the evidences of last year's sweet potato patch which had formerly occupied this area.

Along the river bank I set out a flock of camellia japonicas, mostly red, white and pink ones. I believe I set them out on Wednesday and this Sunday morning I find them in full bloom, so I guess they are doing alright. I picked all the flowers from them, and thought of someone as I was doing so, someone I should have liked to hand them to, - they are so lovely. One has to divest the plants of their flowers at such

1116

times, for to let them maintain their blooms puts too great a strain on the newly transplanted bush.

J. H. ran down to Alexandria on Friday afternoon, and on Saturday morning about 7 a.m., while making a little tour of the gardens, I discovered he had brought back a sweet olive and three rather large gardenia plants, - about three feet high and perhaps as wide. Before good sun up Puny and Mitchell had holes dug for them and they were pretty well "sot" before the sun was well up.

Sweet olives are certainly tempermental items. They are hardy, and not at all fussy about growing in the full glare of the sun, or in the shade or in a dry spot or even a damp spot, - if they just make up their minds to like some especial place. Lots of times you may select what you figure out is the most ideal spot and with great care and regard for the sweet olive's feelings, you may plant it, hoping against hope that the shrub will be pleased. Well, perhaps it will and perhaps it won't, and there isn't anything much the gardener can do about it, - in the event decides not to like the place, but to try and try again. Sometimes I had moved the same plant three or four times, and the thing, just to be contrary will just sit and not grow at all. But after enough moves, the thing will appear to make up its mind that it likes the place, - and the spot may be most inauspicious, and it will start climbing, apparently satisfied either with all the coddling it has had, or perhaps just because it is truly satisfied.

We have quite a few of them here, the largest being perhaps 15 feet, and quite bushy. I know of a large one at Hickory Hill, over in Feliciana, near Miss Eva Scott's that is like a tree, with a trunk perhaps ten inches through.

The camelia japonica is equally fussy, but appears ready to respond always when the place selected for it is fair. It can't stand having its feet in water. It must have a severe drainage. Too much sun will shrivel it to death and too much shade will stunt its growth, - if it grows at all. Always delicate at the beginning, once it has made up its mind to grow, it appears to become altogether hardy, and like the swan, lives for a century or more. I believe those at Laurel Hill must be about 150 years old, as an English traveler spoke of them as being large in 1840. But some of the finest gardens in Natchez and Louisiana have been overrun by cows, as the fine old plantations have gone down, and in the winter time, a cow will eat almost anything, especially if it has fine green leaves like the camelia, although the same cow is not averse to chewing the tops of any bush or plant if it thinks the branches might be tender or juicy.

1117

I have had quite a lot of correspondence to attend to this week, but fortunately there hasn't been much incoming mail, and I have neglected answering some of that for this week end.

A note from Mr. Dan Debaillon from LaFayette, - four miles in the country, - calls for an immediate acknowledgement. Caroline Mornon has long promised to give him advice on his garden, - and the time for trimming many things in Louisiana is right now. But Caroline, lost in her Briarpatch, has not come through and Mr. D. is depressed, but withal gentlemanly about it. His wife, Mary Swords Debaillon, developed a wonderful little garden, - perhaps an acre or two, and dying a year ago left it in her husband's care, although he is rather busy as a lawyer. In a way I am not sorry that Caroline didn't get her finger into the pie, for Caroline's weakness is native stuff and she also tends to give so much attention to the glories of the individual item that she loses sight of the garden itself, - and the resulting hodge-podge I find neither attractive nor restful, - which just about lets out any excuse for a garden, in my opinion.

A card from James indicates that he got off from Baton Rouge for Oklahoma on Thursday. His new address you may or may not have. It is Mr. J. P., care of Miss Edith Mahiers, 416 West Eufaula Street, Norman, Oklahoma. I am not certain as to the spelling of that curious street name, and I wouldn't swear that it is correct, but I reckon it might get a letter there, if one were pressed to communicate.

No news out of New Orleans, save for the occasional note from little Miss Alberta, threatening to come up and paint, as of April 1st. There is nothing from Wyle of course, and one merely wonders, and continues to speak of him as in the past tense.

I suppose Miss Culver and a friend may arrive this week end, or perhaps in the middle of the week. That will be busy times for me, I reckon, what with all the talking I shall want to do while I have that lady's ear. And so things turn, - lots of sunshine, lots of physical exercise, a little bit of education in the horticultural field and nothing at all in the mental department on the book side, but I count this period as one of those interims when one must make the most of the physical by way of preparation for an opportunity when words come through from old Mr. Rosenwald, etc. It is so wise to keep one's self in control awaiting the sound of Opportunity knocking at the door.....

1118

I think it was Will Percy in *Lanterns on the Levee* spoke of gardenias - possibly he called them cape jassemine, as being always sickly but forever alive. They seem very subject to some sort of a musk or soot like fungus growth on the leaves. A white fly makes a kind of cotton like nest on the leaves, too, and if the soil isn't very acid, the leaves take on a jaundiced appearance. And yet they seem to grow and grow, year in and year out, and although they prefer partial shade and considerable dampness, they will thrive even in a dry soil and a blazing sun. It would seem as though the mulattoes must have been especially fond of them, for one is always finding them in their gardens, and one or two old ante bellum bushes still flourish in the Ile Bevelle graveyard.

On Cane River the land is almost too rich for all these plants, which seem to do best in the Natchez soil. For myself, in making a garden, I like to stress the flowers I like plus the things that seem to respond most readily to the type of soil where one finds himself located. Roses do marvelously in the Natchez country and not much over here. The soil of Natchez, too, was just made for camellias, and is counted one of the five most ideal spots in the country for them, I believe. - Lafayette, La., St. Francisville, which is really a part of the Natchez country, Augusta, Georgia and Charleston, S. C., I believe are considered the finest or should I say best adapted soils for the japonica, - with possibly Mobile, Alabama, included in the group.

With a nurse to look after the Madam on Monday, I shall be able to devote more time to gardening. I plan to trim a flock of pear trees, remove the leaves of the palms, - those leaves of two years ago, which tend to shrivel up in the course of time, plant some large yuons, - a bush bearing deep orange berries, - three of which have died out from the front hedge and must be replaced.

An interruption intervenes, as between this paragraph and the one above. It is well, for I fear I have lingered too long on certain aspects of plant life in the South which must be dull a best.

Still, in discussing these things, I do not do so as much because of the theoretical aspects of them as a contemplative promise of certain tomorrows in the Meade Villa neighborhood, and that is something that it does no harm to keep one's telescope trained on, since wish so often is father to the fact.

1119

February 28th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

This may or may not be a brief report. Dawn is breaking in the East, and already the bamboo hedge is redolent with the blackbirds, tuning up their pipes for the beginning of a new day. Almost any minute a dusky hand may knock at my door, followed by a second, third, fourth, fifth, etc., for more gardening is in the offing and I had better be present to give a little advice.

It is good to have your letter, even though it brought news of your illness. I do sincerely hope that everything is on the mend by now. I urge you to conserve your strength as much as you can. Cut all the corners you can, and keep away from Brooklyn, and that exhausting trip whenever possible. Sometimes, for myself, it seems selfish when I ask myself in the middle of the night, if I should make a round to the big house, - just to be sure that everything is alright. Selfish, that is to say, when I tell myself to let sleeping dogs lie, and yet I save my conscience by saying that the preservation of one's own health is the first law to be observed, and any extra vitality may then be expended on others. Do, please, try to take care of you.

A mildly disturbing letter came out of New Orleans yesterday. It was from little Miss Alberta. She said Lyle had talked with her, saying that he had sold his house and asking her to write the Madam that he would like to come to Melrose.

Miss Alberta is scheduled to come up on April 1st.

The Madam asked me to respond, explaining to Miss A., that she wants her to come whenever and as soon as she can, but at the same time saying that she cannot take on anyone else.

interruption.

Well, I shall write the letter, and I think I shall side-step any reference to Lyle whatsoever. I certainly hope he doesn't resume his residence here too soon. I have enough to attend to without taking on another patient. I shall of course keep you advised as to how things turn on this subject.

(over)

1120

The "Madam's nurse, Mrs. Pickles, - of all names, seems to be a very nice person, and she is really pumping liquids and food into the Madam. I think the latter is improving steadily but slowly. The nurse must take up another case on Monday, so I reckon I shall have to take over at that time. I think she is quite weak as yet, perhaps because she realizes she can relax a little more physically while having someone to assist her as she goes from the bed, - at dinner and supper time, to her sofa. She seems to bend slightly forward and gives the impression of considerable age, - actually 74, I believe, in years, but somehow these last few days seeming older.

A few weeks more, and we shall know if she is going to resume some of her old time vigor or not. I presume not, - at least to the extent of anything approaching her one time vitality.

Your reference to the fact that she writes but infrequently impells me to say that I think she senses nothing as to direct communications as between us. She is so cloudy as to when and how often everyone writes that I think she doesn't realize if we communicate directly or not. She frequently remarks how busy you are bound to be and it is my honest opinion that all is secure in that department. She herself writes almost nothing, - and during the past two months has done nothing in that line, save perhaps to one or two of her sons, and I have had to do much of that. At the present time, what with neuritis and being flat in bed, writing, of course, is impossible.

Yesterday I went to the hills in back of Derry, - the stronghold of the hill-billies, in search of some yupon, - I am uncertain of the spelling. It is a tree or glorified bush usually covered with bright orange berries. A hedge of them stretches across the front of Melrose, and as three were lacking, I wanted to find some to replace the missing ones.

I did so merely to replace and finish out the line, for personally I don't care much about anything that is native to the hill billy country. I think that is where Caroline and I come to a parting of the ways in the flower department. She is so enthusiastic about native stuff, that she is forever including it in her planting in the river bottoms. For myself, I prefer that the hill stuff stay in the hills, - yupon, pine, scrub oak, etc. Let us in the river bottoms give the gardenias and camellias their big opportunities and leave the native stuff, born in the hills, remain there.

1121

You mention Mrs. Stanely Arthur. She is the wife of the author of the Audubon item, and up to now we have not had a copy of that volume, although I shouldn't search for it especially.

I think the reason we haven't had one is because of some professional jealousy, as between Lyle and Stanley Arthur, which has carried over into the big house. But a lot of those gaps have filled themselves in since his absence from here has been more and more prolonged.

The man who drove me to the hills yesterday was Ezra. Last year a family come to Melrose from out in the hills. (interruption).

I was speaking of the hills. On Melrose lives a family, - styled Mexican, - who probably have a mixture of Spanish, Indian, French and negro in them. A 18 year old daughter died, leaving two sisters, two stalwart brothers, a father and mother. They wanted to bury the girl back in the hills from whence they had descended. They got a good man, Ezra, to take them in a truck along with the casket. Negroes aren't permitted to show themselves in the hills. The hill billies chase them out or better still murder them if they can.

Accordingly, it was quite a concession for Ezra, a negro, to consent to drive the party out there.

It was after 6 p.m., when the body arrived on the train at Derry, and it was 8 or 10 miles up through the hills to the cemetery. The family was sure where the burial ground was. The negro had to inquire of hill billies. They glowered at him. Eventually after dark they found the place. Fortunately there was a moon of sorts. But on arriving, Ezra found that the family had made no arrangements for having a grave dug.

Now it seems in these parts that no member of the corps's family can assist in digging a grave, - "it's bad luck, that's all". - And so in the sandy soil, by the light of the moon, poor Ezra, with hilly billies shouting at him from the brush, had to dig the grave while the stalwart young men and the father of the dead girl could only sit on the casket and watch him work.

It was one o'clock in the morning before the burial was completed and the truck could start back. Ezra hadn't been out there since, not until yesterday.

1121

1122

I am sorry I have told't is little episode so poorly,
but I have had many interruptions and several people are
awaiting me, so so I must fold.

But not before saying please go slow....

1123

March 4th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I am sure you will find much of interest in the
enclosed communication.

It is good to know that Oklahoma is to bring out
the folk lore book. I doubt if it will have much sale, and
I shall be surprised if it ever calls for a second
edition.

As this volume, or the material in it, was culled
from the Melrose library, not so much for its own interest
as an omnibus for the Clemence illustrations, the printing
of the volume without the illustrations, seems somewhat
pointless. But perhaps there will be the demand for another
edition, and if the first printing is so set up as to make
possible the including of illustrations in the second
edition, the the cost of the second printing, of course,
would be comparatively small, giving some opportunity for
greater expense involved in bringing out the illustrations,
so that the expense of the second or illustrated edition,
would be somewhat absorbed by expenses in setting up the
first edition. I must write Mr. Pipes regarding this
matter, so he may call it to the attention of the Editors,
who probably have thought this point through, but who may
not have done so.

It is my understanding that Ziba has gone through a
third printing, which is really quite remarkable for
a book of its kind. Whatever the fate of the folk lore book,
once it is printed, is comparatively secondary, so far
as I shall be effected. The importance of the issuance of
this volume is that it may lead to a third item to be published,
and if Bobbs Merrill doesn't do the Scrapbook, perhaps they
might bring out la Beaumont or some such. I must write
Mr. Pipes regarding the latter volume. He liked to call
it "Laurel Hill", name of one of the engines on the Woodville
Bayou Sara Railroad, but there have been so many plantations
known as Laurel Hill, - Mr. Mercer's at Natchez, Dr.
Nutt's at Rodney, etc., that I had in mind another title.
What with la Beaumont's independence and laudable self
assurance as a trades woman, thriving in the midst of
super plantation society, I thought a more descriptive
title, and one especially suited to la-Baum(Beaumont)
would be "Pride Without Pillars, - but that was merely my
own idea and might not be any better than Laurel Hill.
over

CS11

1124

A telegram from little Miss Alberta indicates that she will be up on the Monday night train from New Orleans. In view of her suggestion that Lyle is ready to come, - as indicated in an earlier communication, I most certainly hope she doesn't pull a surprise and drag him along with her. But what little Miss A. might do can never be anticipated until she has done it, and so I shall sit somewhat uncomfortably until 9:30 on Monday night when she, - alone, I hope, - will descend from the train.

The Madam thinks, or rather says, that Miss Alberta will "remain for several months", - which may or may not be the truth, - or a good guess. In the correspondence I have had with little Miss A., there has been nothing to indicate such plans, but possibly previous conversation of two years ago this summer may lend some credence to such an assumption. I hope it may be in line with future events, for everyone here, - J. H. in his house and I in mine, will sleep the more soundly if someone is under the same roof as the Madam. Frankly, in folding up, one doesn't sleep too soundly if one ear has to be kept stuck out from under the covers, wondering if the buzzer is going to sound or has sounded.

As for the Madam's health, it appears to be rather better. She spent much time yesterday in her arm chair, - but not dressed. Immediately after the nurse's departure on Friday morning, however, the Madam gave up eating much, and so far as I could see, she consumed little food on Saturday, save an egg-nog, which is good so far as it goes, but certainly doesn't go far enough.

Sister and her husband left for Mobile yesterday, to visit Bellingrath Gardens today, and will probably be back on Monday. Sunday, accordingly, should be rather quiet around this place.

I must write a letter to la Haygood today, making inquiry as to what her plans are for Easter time. I have a feeling that she isn't especially interested in the negro, but rather more concerned with transacting the duties of her job, - her routine duties, rather than the implied ones. We shall eventually see. That may be one reason why I think she leans on Harnett Kane for advice, and if she takes his words as Gospel, I have grave misgivings as to Mr. Pipes' chances to be granted a second allotment from old Rosenwald, since I am sure Harnett torpedoed him as much as possible when he saw la Haygood in the summer or fall or whenever. Her visit here ought to be filled with a couple of exciting eye-openers, at least, not to mention honest opportunities on the negro-mulatto side, if she is in a mood to receive such particulars.

1125

I don't recall if it is in this enclosed letter or a former one that reference is made to "Uncle Ike's" Diary. The reference is of course to the Isaac Erwin Diary, which was the manuscript the Madam saved when her grandfather, Isaac Erwin's estate, one generation removed, was settled.

At the present moment, the Madam's attitude toward Mr. Pipes seems to be very favorable, - as Mr. Kane's declines. I know she will be delighted at the prospect of Oklahoma considering it for publication, and I have written a rough draft of a letter, written by the Oklahoma Press to her, and forwarded it to Mr. Pipes.

There is a great deal of interesting and valuable material in the Erwin Diary, and it is rather more extensive than most documents of its kind. It is just the sort of thing a University Press would like to publish, as it is documentary and without much public appeal. Plenty of notes could be stirred up from Melrose records and the Madam's memory. The only catch in the thing is the fact that such an item would never be productive from the point of view of money, and that is something to be considered. Obviously one must decide if the investment of time, - which shouldn't be excessive, - would be worth while, particularly from the point of view of the possibilities its publication might lead to, - particularly in the establishment of closer relations with the press on my own account, for Heaven knows there are plenty of other things of more popular appeal that might be submitted, should the University experience some satisfaction in realizing its desire to bring out a purely pedagogical item with practically no popular appeal.

And this leads me to think of The Chase Material. I think it might do no harm to write the Bible Society at this time. Might I ask you a favor, - to see if the Bible Society is listed in the telephone book, - although I would not know under what precise adjective it might be listed. Possibly it might appear under "American Bible Society", or some such. Should that not prove to be the case, it is possible that somebody at The Bible House, might be able to set us straight on this point. That organization, I do not recall its precise title, is on Park Avenue at about 57th Street, as I recall. I think we used to purchase Bibles from them in the old days, "si j'ai bonne memoire".

1126

The past few weeks have been so busy in the nursing and nursery departments, that I seem to have concentrated mostly on the vitamin section of life as opposed to the gray matter section. Last week two shipments of gardenias, sweet olives and what not were added to the undertakings already under way in the camelia department. On Tuesday we are expecting a shipment of yellow Chinese magnolias and a new batch of camelias, so I reckon the early part of the week will be pretty full of such business. "hat with little Miss Alberta being here, my feeling of "must" as to attendance on my patient, will be lessened, and if Lyle doesn't come, I shall feel fairly free to operate in gardening without having to break off half a dozen times a day to lend companionship to the ailing. With the good health I am storing up in this out of door activity, I should be all "sot" for manuscript concentration, should old Mr. Rosenwald come across and Mr. Martin's services become available through Rosenwald monies.

Using the phrase "all sot", - a typical Cane River negro expression, I am reminded of the use of a word the other day by a negro which I thought rather nice. I was inquiring about a new road being built from Cane River back to Little River. I wanted to know what progress was being made to transmit the information to Charles Magurette, who will be returning from his Winter in New Orleans shortly. The negro told me that the new road would be "slep straight, excusin' one little place where the new road goes a little languid". - I like roads that "go languid".

Well, enough for the moment. I have had frequent interruptions while jotting down these few lines, so if they seem more disjointed than usual, you will understand.

In these parts, the weather continues warm and during the past couple of days, very rainy. The rivers and bayous, feeling the swell of melting snows in the Missouri and Mississippi valleys, are beginning to swell, and I suppose high water, spreading over fields hereabout is the next thing in order, but not very inconveniencing. I think about the subway, and the long journey to Brooklyn and I am hoping a touch of spring in your neighborhood may reduce the atmospheric drawbacks and that, first of all, you will give some thought to your own good self.....

1127

March 6th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Thirty five thousand times during the past twenty four hours have I held conversation with the Clipping Service. The surprise of hearing so soon and the manifestation of thoughtfulness and affection, expressed in such concrete terms, leaves me unable to express myself coherently on the subject, although a thousand sensations of gratitude have welled up within me, as I contemplate all that has gone before and unfailing registers a regard by anticipation. It is so good to experience the sensation of liberty of movement, should necessity arise, but lots more thrilling is the sensation that someone, at present, but ever close in spirit, stands immediately within the grasp of the heart and the hand.

The latest report was grand. I only regret the under estimate, as expressed in the Report, as to the value such paragraphs are to me. Readily can I understand if communications from here fill a certain void, for when one stops to think of it, my primary contact with all that matters, - matters today and matters tomorrow, is the source from whence comes these marvelous reports, giving me life and a reason for existence.

The latest news in these parts stems from little Miss Alberta who arrived last night at 9 p.m. I merely talked with her as we came from the station. According to her, - and she is dizzy, these are the latest developments; - Lyle is ever so much better. She can tell if he has been drinking when she calls him up. If he is good natured, he is drinking, - otherwise, he is cross. He sold his house for \$27,000.00. When he has paid his twenty one thousand dollars in, or of debts, he will have six thousand left. He wants her to write him this morning, letting him know how Aunt Cammie is. He wants to come to "elrose within the next two or three weeks. He is ambitious, - wants to write. He can have a job any time he wants in on the Times Picayune. He wouldn't drink if he were in the country. He can't help drinking in New Orleans where every one tempts him. So there you have the main points of little Miss Alberta's ideas, and if you find them somewhat cockeyed, then you find them precisely as do I.

(over)

1128

There were so many points you touched upon in your report that interested me exceedingly that I know not which one to refer to first. The doings of the folks in the house on the hill is always of interest. It just occurs to me that La Grignan's husband has always reminded me vaguely of someone, - and now it dawn's on me, - Gertrude's husband.

An apology is in order if I failed, as failed I must, to have mentioned receipt of the two issues of Life, the S. F. B. Morse issue and the one on Athens. How right you were in sensing that these would hold a lot for me, and I can only imagine having failed to mention them because I must have talked so much to myself about them that when I sat down to write, I assumed that I had already referred to them in previous correspondence. I am glad if you will mention such items, should I fail to acknowledge because a second class matter can go astray, and I want everything of that nature that is intended for me. I have these two numbers here on my desk, and I love to turn through them, they are so restful, as opposed to so much of the stuff which, of necessity, takes first place over what seems to me the more basic things which we want to keep in mind and treasure.

In yesterday's mail there was a note to the Madam from Rebecca Haygood. The letter stated that she was postponing her visit to Melrose from the last of March until the first of May. She also enclosed a Rosenwald form, asking for the Madam's personal opinion of my qualifications to do the "contemplated study". This was merely a form to be added to the paraphernalia to be submitted to the Board, I assume. It didn't take the Madam long to fill out the form, and confidentially, I dictated the whole business. The Madam added a personal letter, in reference to the lady's threatened visit. I certainly hope Old Man River isn't here in May, for I want to have that lady all to myself, what with the Clemence manuscript, the Melrose school and a couple of other projects which I should like to air at that time.

I think you have courage to ask for one of my incomparable maps. I laugh to myself as I think of how laboriously I worked on a couple such sketches about the time you were penning your note. They were so bad that I tossed them into the trash basket when done. But I shall make another attempt shortly, - so brace yourself. You ask about Mr. Pipes. I think a subsequent letter, recently forwarded, may explain all. I am setting my course, in a large measure, by the manner in which the forthcoming volume on folk lore is handled. In a way, it is all his. In another it isn't. I shall consider the handling of the item as a kind of barometer by which a pathway inclining either toward strictest Collaboration or, on the other hand, toward Independence of effort. (with so much dynamite in one epistle, I would suggest immediate destruction of the memorandum.....)

1129

March 8th.

Merely a Memorandum:

Time presses, but I want to drop a few pieces of correspondence in the mail this morning. None of them are very interesting, perhaps, from a news point, but they possibly do indicate little glimpses of what goes on.

The note from Mr. Pipes shows, of course, that the matter of the Erwin Diary is about to come to the boiling point. I have vaguely referred to the satisfaction one would experience if one could only some day contrive to get that item in print. By the time the letter comes from the Oklahoma Press, the ground will have been well prepared and the thing should germinate readily. It will serve a variety of purposes, - re-establishment of better relations with Mr. Pipes on the Madam's part, a re-newed interest in things generally on her part, closer relations, as between the University Press and Melrose, etc., etc.

Caroline's letter, of course, speaks for itself, - nothing important, but pleasant as an impressionist painting of doings at Briarwood. Somehow her letters put me in mind of Turner landscapes, - you are no doubt acquainted with the collection of the latter at the Metropolitan, - blurred a little but distinctly impressive.

The letter from Roan moves the date of her visit from March until April. That will suit me better, I think, should it not impinge upon the advent of old Rosenwald. It is possible that by the time she and Alice blow in, - conforming in part to the date of a waxing April moon, I shall know something about the grant, and if so, I shall be able to haul a lot of stuff to "atchez with me, - manuscripts, on which I can start Mr. Martin in his work of transcription.

The little house Roan refers to is one on Beverly, originally constructed for a tenant, and later refurbished with a view of Dr. Miller occupying it. I must take Roan apart for her somewhat questionable phrase, "Goblein Tapestry from Grand Rapids which should make me feel right at home. I shall assume she meant home at Grand Rapids rather than at Goblein, just for the sake of starting something.

Again I would repeat that thirty five thousand times I have conversed relative to as many subjects within the past couple of days. I shall get to jotting down a few of them shortly. At the moment I must get along in the gardening section.....

1811

1130

March 13th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The enclosures speak for themselves. I reckon they are not of great interest, but may provide some sidelight as to how the correspondence field functions.

I should like to speak of the Rands, - Dr. and Mrs. Paul King Rand, of Alexandria, Louisiana, with whom I usually dine when passing through town going to Mississippi.

Dr. Rand is an exceptionally successful physician. But medicine is his profession which is balanced by his hobbies. He has a carpentry shop in his house, and he finishes furniture beautifully. He like to garden and is President of the Louisiana Camelia Society. His collection of books is good, - not vast but interesting and diversified.

Mrs. Rand is swell. Her homey home is beautifully managed. Things are comfortable and her food is wonderful. There are usually two or three people, aside from the family, for dinner and supper. Mrs. Rand never writes a letter but she thinks nothing of keeping up with her friends all over Louisiana by calling on them. Not even the breaking of her left arm a few months back kept her from driving her own car. She has great energy without tiring out people with whom she is in contact.

They have four or five children, - several married sons and one daughter, - the latter having 3 or 4 sons. Most of the men are in the war, as was Dr. Rand in the last.

A friend of the Rands is Mrs. Maude Pattison, a "widow lady", a little on the type of la Moore. She is a sister in law of Maury Maverick, the Texas Congressman. She lives in Alexandria.

Yesterday I spoke with Mrs. Rand on the telephone. The connection was poor. But from what I could make of it, she has been asked by some group or other, - she and Mrs. Pattison, to enlist my services to give a talk sometime or other in Alexandria. She spoke of a hall where the thing would be held, but I pointed out that my voice had no carrying power. I believe she said a microphone would be provided. I am not sure if the speech is to be broadcast or merely amplified by a public address system. They want me to talk on the general subject of Cane River, and should that go over nicely, as they have courage enough

over

0811

1131

to believe, there will be a demand for other address on other subjects covering Louisiana. I could go for something on the Concordia Parish stuff, since Concordia is just opposite Natchez.

interruption.

Well, that's about the sum and substance of yesterday's developments.

In the morning I had planned to build a fountain, but it drizzled a little and apparently dissolved all my dusky assistants. And so the fountain business got nowhere, and what with things awaiting my attention today, I reckon I shall put off the fountain building for a week or so.

J. A. Henry is in Washington, D. C. for some sort of a Federal Commission meeting, - he is on so many Boards that I never know which one is calling him where. On his return I reckon there may be some inkling as regards Bellevue, Nubia or whatever, - although I must stress again that that whole subject is purely nebular and may never come to light.

In Washington he will see his brother, the General, and as the latter seems to be very kindly disposed toward me, it is quite possible that he may have something to say about the little plot of ground mentioned above. A letter from the General to his mama the other day remarked that he would always be jealous of the writer of recent reports on that lady's health. I thought it subtle flattery or gracious in expressing his thanks for such reports.

Clif Byrd and Guy Walters were here for the week end from Shreveport. Clif was adamant about me coming to spend a few days with him at his home in Shreveport. He did what he could to get me to say I would visit him and enlisted the Madam's aid to push me. But I am not dreaming of going to Shreveport. After all, what with all the things hanging fire in this area and in the Natchez region, I don't have to take on the entresol to Texas, which, in my opinion, Shreveport is.

The Madam seems to be doing alright, is much stronger and threatening to get down stairs one of these days.

Her interest in scrapbooks grows, and yesterday a big article in a local paper as to the current Rivers and Harbors Bill in the Congress hopper, has spurred her along to include more stuff in her books. I think I am not too crazy about the proposal for the Red River Basin, making a canal from Shreveport to the Mississippi, via Cane River which would serve as an integral part of the system. I don't think we need barges on Cane River, but they might have some interest. -- The Life and Harper copies to hand. I am opening them this evening, and know I have a treat in store. Thanks endlessly.....

0811

1132

March 18th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Thanks so much for the grand report, coming to hand in Saturday's mail, and acknowledging so many communications received, as of Monday last past.

Before I forget it, let me hasten to assure you that destruction of the Dornon letter makes no difference. The Madam saves a file, but she will have forgotten that the item went forward to her, or if she ever should recall, I will lie and say I failed to send it and that I have it among my papers and will insert it in the file eventually. As for all other communications, you might destroy them, unless you should care to return the Oklahoma Press note, which might be returned to me. The loss of it, however, would make no difference, as there is no need for it anymore. I loved your account of the examples of "Art", as coming to hand for eventual hanging, - a hanging to take place in some out of the way closet. Thanks the Lord you can catch a glimpse of the sunshine of humor in what must be an otherwise rather trying experience, finding space to store anything in an apartment. And also, while I think of it, may I thank you for your good offices, relative to the Bible Society. It was characteristically thoughtful of you to do more than asked, - secure a mere address, and naturally I am delighted to have the name of Miss Margaret Hill, to whom I shall write later today, and if possible, I shall put enough punch in the communication to make her sit up and take notice.

After getting off the letter to Miss Hill, I shall make up my mind what to do, in case she should ask to see the manuscript. It covers such a variety of subjects and dwells in spots so endlessly on purely personal relations, as between old Mr. Chase and God Almighty that for a script reader, the thing could have a lot more punch in it, if some of the extraneous stuff were deleted. But being possessed of no reader at the moment, and confronted with such a bulky manuscript, - I may just send the whole thing along, - in case it is asked for, accompanied by a rough synopsis that may intrigue the script reader to wade through the duller parts to find the wealth of Bible disseminating with which the Society would be most concerned.

SC11

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The greatest drawback about the manuscript, aside from its length, is the fact that so many of the episodes appear more the creation of a fertile imagination than hard truth. And yet the oldsters still living in Natchez who remember Dr. Chase all concur in declaring that he, of all people, was the most honest and truthful individual in the world, and I must say that some of the rather outlandish things he hands out as Gospel truth have been confirmed in toto by other research that I have done from time to time on the same subject, without knowing at that time of the existence of the Chase manuscript.

Well, we shall see, and in the mean time, may I say
Thank you again for all your good offices.

A note from Miss Myr Smith of Devereux came to hand yesterday. I enclose it, and as I have no need for it, you might dispose of it as you will. Following my last visit, I gather Miss Myra and Miss Gnd. - a dull lady living with her, have taken up gardening in a serious fashion. The gardens of Devereux are rather extensive and there is plenty to keep those two ladies occupied. I most certainly shall drop by to see Miss Myra when next I am in town. Devereux, by the way, is about half a mile from the end of St. Catherine Street, on the direct road to Washington, and as Devereux would be passed everytime one went to and from Meade Villa to Natchez, it would always be nice to have such a delicious stopping off place.

With the Madam still dining upstairs, Miss Alberta and I frequently find ourselves having lunch together downstairs. Miss Alberta is silly, of course, and frequently I find I can up-set her without even trying. Yesterday, for example, I casually remarked how glad I am that Socialized Medicine is going to be made available eventually for the countless thousands now unable to afford medical care on a pay as you go basis. Only after I had made the remark did I realize that Miss Alberta is a Christian Scientist, and naturally she is all against any kind of Federal assistance to anything in the medical field. "Insult to injury" is about the only expression to cover my barb in that case, I guess. As Miss A., expressed it, "Why should I have to pay taxes to support something which is entirely against my beliefs?" I pointed out that poverty stricken mothers, - or expectant mothers, might be worth expending a little money on, in such situation, whereupon Miss Alberta pulled that old line about the having of children which always slays me: "If people would just hold the thought, they wouldn't have babies?"

On Saturday night we had another wash out of rain. It came about the time the black birds were preparing to fold up their beards and take to the bamboo hedges for the night. The lightning and showers prevented their early retirement, and thousands of them blackened the skies for over an hour as they wheeled about the big pecane and oaks preparatory for

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taking to their beds. It would be difficult to estimate the vast numbers that circle about the place each evening and each daybreak, - possibly five thousand, possibly 25 thousand. It seems that they must always sit in the pecane trees just before going to bed and just after getting up from their bamboo couches in the morning, and the density of their numbers is astonishing. Last year, Shreveport had quite a time with them. The public Square and Court House is surrounded by live oaks. People would park their cars there, on a going to dinner. Returning to their cars an hour later, they would experience the greatest difficulty in locating them, what with the incredible amount of fertilizer that had been dropped from the trees. People's clothes, in crossing the street, were wrecked. Something had to be done, and so the City Fathers decided to cut down the live oaks. The ladies, however, on the assumption that guillotining was not necessary to alleviate a headache, protested vehemently, - and the trees remain standing and the birds continued to use them as a roost. The Fire Department hit on the idea of soaking the birds every time they settled down for a nice nap. That was effective for five minutes, although it did soak a lot of unsuspecting citizens. And then the birds, after taking a short turn, would come right straight back. Electric lights were then strung in the trees, but the birds seemed to like the mazadas to sleep by. Eventually a plan that worked was tried out. Boy Scouts were pressed into service, and armed with lawn mowers, they would push them about the square every time the birds threatened to settle in the trees. The noise seemed to worry the birds where the fire hose and the electric lights did not. And so, at long last, Shreveport's public square is free of black birds who have taken up their perches in various suburbs, to the great distress of citizens living in out-lying districts.

With such displays of the doings of our feathered friends, - when out of hand numerically, I can the more readily appreciate the problem of the passenger pigeons that used to darken the skies in this region in the early 1800's. You may have read of the passenger pigeons in Audubon's Journal, - I think in the Kentucky neighborhood, as I recall.

Well, the day is getting under way, and I have someone waiting to see me, and so I shall have to fold up for the moment. Thanks again for your grand letter and for the Bible Society address. I'll be back again shortly. Don't let the Brooklyn Art get you down.....

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1135

Mr. Breux

March 20th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

"And dawn, with silver-sandled feet", as Oscar Wilde might
and did express it, is just getting under way.

I am just back from Derry, where J. H. and I took little
Miss Alberta to catch the 5 o'clock train for New Orleans.
She left her painting duffle here, and plans to return shortly,-
say 10 days or two weeks.

With this pre-view of the day behind me, I look into a
busy time from now until bed time, for there is much gardening
to be done, and at 5 o'clock this evening, Essae Mae and
Miss Ramsay will arrive to spend the night, - and possibly
longer.

I need not rehearse how glad I always am at the opportunity
to cultivate La Culver. I reckon the Madam will probably fold up
about 8 p.m., as is her custom, and I shall probably have the
ladies on my hands here in this house for a prolonged sitting,-
I hope.

La Ramsay does stuff for The Saturday Evening Post and
Life, and it goes without saying that I shall push Cane River hard,
and little Miss Clemence in particular. I understand that Miss
Ramsay's article with photographs of Louisiana moss appeared in
the Saturday Evening Post sometime during the year, but I never
did see it. I reckon I shall learn more particulars on that
point shortly.

From the enclosures, you will note that James appears to
be working on the Life representative, too. We shall see what
may result from pressure from two widely separated points.

I suppose there may be several references in James letter
that may not be quite clear. La Braid, of course, is the Madam.
I think he makes some reference to how I digest his mail. This
is in line with the fact that Mr. Brew or Mr. Breux, - my 16
year old reader, usually passes by my house right after school,
which frequently is just prior to the supper hour, - a time
when I usually take off my long beard and splash through a
bath, following a busy time in the gardening department. In
consequence, - to save Mr. Breux's time and to assure myself
that I shall learn the contents of the mail before another dawn
and correspondence time, has rolled 'round, Mr. Breux reads

(over)

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the letters while I am engaged in creating oceans of soap suds. It certainly is an odd time to press a secretary into service, but under the circumstances, - what with his pre and ante supper activities and my own, this seems to be about the only time one can positively count on.

Mr. Breux's first name is Earle, but when he was about 5 years old, J. H. Henry, impressed by the boy's serious demeanor and responsibilities, styled him Mr. Breux and Mr. Breux or sometimes spelled Brew, has been Mr. Breux or Brew ever since.

I think I may have mentioned that his father was the Casanova of Cane River. Colored ladies, without end, threw themselves at Odysseus Breux, and ~~asixx~~ save for philandering, Mr. O. Breux would have nothing more to do with them. Then one day, "Teena", - so called because she was the 19th child in her family, was pursued by this attractive youth. A baby was conceived, and to everyone's astonishment, Odysseus besought Teena's hand in marriage. But Teena would have none of him, - save the contact already referred to. And in consequence of all this carryings on, Teena begot a son, Earle, my reader, and Odysseus bemoaned the snub, and eventually, after came here, died of tuberculosis. It is one of the strange love affairs of this region. Later Teena married a man living on one of the Prudhomme plantations in Bermuda (La Cote Joyeuse", and Mr. Brew lives with his grandmother, Sis Randolph, at Melrose. He is very intelligent, makes good coffee and reads well. Eventually should Linderhof come into focus, Mr. Brew might be something in the set up.

Did I tell you that I got off a fairly satisfactory letter, - by air, - to Miss Margaret Hill, on Monday. I referred to her conversation with you, outlined the general nature of the Journal, with a biographical sketch of the Rev. B. Chase, and suggested that if it was felt this remarkable document merited a printing under the Society's auspices, I would send a portion of it for inspection, with the understanding that, should the manuscript be accepted, I would supply the notes, covering individuals and events appearing in the manuscript. Eventually, - should it be accepted, I shall ask for the copyright in my name. Should she ask that a portion of the Journal be sent, I shall of course lift out a slice, - the section detailing the brief history of the founding of the Society in London in the early 1800's and some of B. Chase's activities as its American agent in the great South West. In the event the manuscript should be rejected, I think I shall ask her to forward it to you, - if you should care to look at it. I should warn you that it is mighty dull for the most part, but astonishingly informative and sometimes unbelievably hilarious. What with all the bulk of the enclosures, I had better fold at this point. I think so often of the new domestic arrangements and hope they are getting shaken down, without too much wear and tear on the one whose shoulders support so many burdens.....

1137

March 22nd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

High-Ho! Too many visitors, and yet not too many.

I may or may not have reported putting Miss Alberta on the train for New Orleans on Tuesday morning at 5. The day as it unrolled, turned out to be fairly full.

About 3 p.m., Caroline Dormon and "Ole Virginie" blew in. An hour later, "Ole Virginie" blew out again, going to town to spend the night, with Caroline remaining here until the following day.

While Caroline and I were at supper along about 5:30, la belle Essae Mae and Caroline Ramsay arrived. You may have seen some of Caroline Ramsay's colored photographs and articles which have appeared in the Saturday Evening Post.

Well, we had a prolonged sitting, - first in the Madam's room and then later in my house, - with only Miss Culver and Miss Ramsay being invited over here.

We covered a lot of ground, and especially the aspects of a future Department of Documents. The sitting lasted until midnight, when the ladies returned to sleep in the big house.

And then something typically Melrose happened. Mattie, the cook, is a field nigger, and cannot tell time, save by the sun. Tuesday night's moon fooled her. The Madam, and Caroline, Dormon, who was sleeping with her, were awakened for their morning beverage. Little Miss Dormon glanced at

the clock and fell back on her pillow in gales of laughter. It was precisely one o'clock in the morning.

On Wednesday morning, - almost noon, I got hold of Miss Ramsay. She is a swell person. Together we went down to call on Clemence. Miss Ramsay was enchanted at the personality and the artistry. I had done what I could to prepare a sale of Cane River to Miss Ramsay. Miss R. was completely sold after her visit to the artist's home.

... She will return here in May, after a quick trip in April to New York. She plans to do some portraits of Clemence while at work, - both manual and artistically engaged. She plans some of these studies with examples of Clemence's paintings as a background. She plans a lot of other angles. The idea was working alright, I could see that.

1138

And so, after finishing this brief report, I am writing a formal letter to Mr. Pipes, advising him that the artist whose illustrations the University Press now holds, along with the manuscript for the folk lore book, is going to be studied in color and in an article or articles, along with Cane River, which will eventually appear in The Saturday Evening Post and in Life, - either publication or both. I remark that I pass this along to him, thinking the publicity angle might interest the Press. We shall see if this makes a dent in The Press, and if Life will come to Cane River first from Oklahoma, as vaguely far referred to in Mr. Pipes' letter to me, or if it will just spring up here at Melrose before Oklahoma gets around to making up its mind. If I can arrange it, I shall try to slow down Miss Ramsay's enthusiasm for the Life angle, and turn it into the Saturday Evening Post channel, while beckoning other representatives of Life to come along, so that both periodicals may give Clemence a thorough going over. So things turn in these parts.

I have no news in particular covering Linderhof or Nubia, as I sometimes think of it. I am afraid it will be impossible to contemplate the Alphone strip at the moment, but yesterday J. H. referred to the Peter strip again, when I remarked that I should like to plant some oaks and magnolias there to get them started before the season gets along too far. He said he was glad I mentioned the matter. From this I assume that the plot of ground is likely to fall into our laps before so very long. In my inimitable map, I fear I gave the impression of a greater amount of land involved than is actually the case, - but to indicate the spot, I unintentionally got the thing out of proportion. Actually there isn't much more than an acre or two, - I guess, - to the West of the Bermuda road, and between it and the river, but it is the prize spot on Cane River, and quite adequate for a good look at the river, the distant hills and oceans of blue sky, - all of which cost nothing, but which, if properly included in the planting being contemplated, ought to make something delicious. I shall draw another one of my inevitable and inimitable sketches shortly, to further indicate location of things as they now stand, and proposed planting, etc.

There are further particulars, but no time to get them down before today's outgoing mail, and so I shall just send this along, but not without adding that my thoughts are busy these days, in an enthusiasm for what stretches ahead in the field of a quiet resting place and retreat in the land of the children of strangers where quiet is golden and peace and friendliness still flourishes for souls who are kindred, and I think it unnecessary for me to enumerate individuals for whom Nubia would be embellished in preparation for a certain day when.....

1139

March 25th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Only a hurried note this morning, as time presses.

Thought you would enjoy seeing the enclosures, as did I.

Apparently the Clemence things went over nicely.

Bobbs Merrill turned down the Louisiana Scrapbook, with the suggestion that it would be better to piece the

several items together. I gather that all the editors who have seen the manuscript thus far have something like Lyle's Old Louisiana that they cannot get it into their minds that this manuscript is, indeed, a Scrapbook. Should the thing be pieced together like Old Louisiana, then the title of Scrapbook would be ridiculous, of course, and one would have to rename it "LUSH OLD LOUZANNA or some such, and the Scrapbook idea, with its potential sales appeal as a tourist item would evaporate before the thing got on the market, and in the end, - after stringing the stuff together, one would have merely another Old Louisiana, and the originality and essence of the whole thing would be non-existent.

I have written Mr. Pipes this morning that I would forward the manuscript to Random House, and after they have turned thumbs down on it, send it on to Hastings House. After all, if a strong enough letter is written, underlining the Scrapbook idea, - and by including a cover from the box of Whitman Sampler Candy, it is just possible that the Scrapbook idea might get across. And Scrapbook for the tourist trade, I assume, would be a desirable item. It is certainly curious how difficult it is to get a simple idea in to the mind of an intelligent mind (interruption)

So much for that. As for the Clemence show, it is good to know that it has gone over so nicely and that a couple of public shows are in the offing. In my note, acknowledging

1140

We don't make much money, but we certainly do stir up pretty good messes.

There is no opportunity to write more at the moment, but I shall be back again shortly, and will burden your mail with additional details and sketches of the inimitable nature with which you are so well acquainted.

1141

.. Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Thank Heave that the Editor in question seems to comprehend the tourist angle, for with such a hurdle once passed, there is a possibility that the Scrapbook idea may catch in Oklahoma, and eventually encompass other States and publishers, - once one of these items may have an opportunity to make a place for itself in the list of slow but prolonged steady sellers. I was especially struck by the reference to the Mississippi Scrapbook, and in responding, I pointed out that since the Uncle Ike (Issac Erwin) item is one that will have but a limited sale at best, it would be well if we might be able to side-track it to give preference to Old Louisiana Scrapbook, Fabulous 52, Pride Without Pillars, and the folk lore items as fill-ins.

I am rushed at the moment, what with people here to give this house a Spring cleaning, and I must accordingly fold. More later, and better, I hope.

In the event that "Hubia should become a reality, so far as possession goes, it would certainly be nice to have our mutual friend, the collaboratore, sitting hard by to give some suggestion and supervision to various undertakings, with a view to his eventually occupying a maisonette on the place. He has his mind set on a strip of property down of Melrose proper, - but that property does not give on the river itself, and there are two disadvantages, - a road which is a little too close, and a bayou which is more pretty to view in passing than to live in, I think. But in the event that strip should become available, it will be nice to have such a neighbor anyway, should the occupant of la maisonnette, in the shadow of the Mison due "seigneur, - sometimes called The Queen's house, turn out to be the focal point. So many little points of secondary importance I shall write about

1142

subsequently. In the mean time, things appear altogether
rose, and may they take on substance shortly. One other
thing I would add, but it eludes me momentarily, so I
shall skip.....

I might add that the reference in the enclosure to
"bayou" refers to the author of the volume beginning
with that word, - Bayous of Louisiana.....

1143

April 2nd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I hope I am not bombarding you too heavily with reports.
In the event that their descent is too fast and furious, please
feel perfectly frank in saying so and I can slow up a little.
I certainly don't want to burden you, especially at a time
when a couple of thousand other circumstances must of necessity must
claim most of your time. Unless advised to the contrary, however,
I shall jog along as usual.

Little Miss Kinsey, - remarkable gnome, reported on
Saturday from New Orleans. She had seen her friend but once since
she returned there from here, and that was the day following
her arrival back home. She has talked with him several times on
the telephone but as he speaks very indistinctly these days, she
didn't learn much directly from these contacts. She did report
from those who have entry, however, that he isn't well, in fact,
according to one of her informants, he is approaching about the
same condition which characterized his physical self just before
going to the hospital last autumn. That certainly doesn't
sound much like reformation, does it?

I reckon you may have read in the papers of the high water
in these parts. Red River is spilling over its levees in
this area, Cane River is up and low lands in the Cloutierville
area are being evacuated of its inhabitants, - a tent city
being put over ~~over~~ up over night to house the refugees.
On the radio the other day, I heard it said, - I think it was
Columbia's World Today program, that the levee of the Mississippi
had broken near Alexandria, La. This came as something of
a surprise, since the Mississippi was about 100 miles away from
Alexandria the last time I knew anything about it. It is
a case in point in which errors can be made and curious impressions
result. I take it that reporting of domestic situations abroad
may sometimes get twisted this way, and no doubt accounts for
Mrs. Brandon's impression as set down in the enclosed letter.

And may I think you at this point for your nice joint
Easter letter which arrived on Saturday. The lady was extremely
pleased and threatened to write you without delay. She may
and she may not. Sometimes she intends to do a letter to
one or the other of her children before sundown, and perhaps
a dozen sun will rise and sink before she gets around to it.
She was delighted to have the clippings, too, although she didn't
read them to me at the time, as guests arrived. We shall be
looking for the copy of the Century you mentioned. She was
pleased about that, too.

1144

I saw J. H. for a few moments on Saturday before he left for New Orleans for the week end. He told me that the General was departing for Italy and Germany shortly. He said that before leaving however the General had written him as regards his opinion about Nubia. According to J. H., the General wrote most flatteringly about the prospective owner of that small acre, and heartily approved of the transfer. In his official capacity as Administrator, I suppose that will make the act practically assured.

From this point on, I think I shall let the matter rock on its own momentum. J. H. already knows that I want to plant magnolias this year, and that May is the ideal time to do that. I assume that the transfer may be made sometime within the next eight weeks. When, - AND IF, - that is accomplished, I shall immediately begin negotiations for the strip along the river, immediately south of the Tapis Vert to guarantee a prolonged view from the North end of the Tapis Vert. This may be somewhat complicated, what with 3 eights of the thing possessed by the "enrys" and 5 eights possessed by "Phonsie" and his family. "Phonsie" father in law now occupies a small cabin, slap at the end of the Tapis Vert where the property adjoins Nubia, but I think that hazard may be hurdled without too much difficulty.

After that, I think I shall have the parcel fenced in, and at the same time the bamboo magnolias are planted for the East side of the Tapis Vert, I shall plant a hedge of bamboo along the entire length of the property, paralleling the Bermuda (Cote d'oyeuse) Road, and possibly along the South Nubian line, adjoining "Phonsie's" property.

This would be something in the nature of a P.W.A. project, but I think I could do it at practically no cost at all. After all, there are plenty of bamboo roots on Melrose, and I might as well make the most of them, thereby giving added seclusion to Nubia and at the same time increasing the value of the property generally.

It might be better to let the fence go until autumn, what with the opening of the planting season, and consequent drainage of man power for fence building. But of course no planting can be done until what is planted is protect from cows that roam the roads at will, and naturally, although things grow fast in this area, it is always nice to get the bamboo curtain rising and the magnolias on their way to producing their "great ivory globes".

Roane and Alice are scheduled to visit here about April 20th. I should like to ride back with them to pick up some documents in Natchez. The date for the Alexandria broadcast has not been determined. No exact date has been set for la Baygood's advent. I shall try to keep my calendar fluid, with only one "must" on the docket, - a constant stream of Memoranda.....

1145

April 9th, 1945

Memorandum to Clipping Service: This is not so much a report, as an excuse for enclosures. As I recall, the letter from Mary Rhodes is fairly clear as to personalities and places mentioned. The individual referred to as moving from North Union to South Union is Dr. Butler's daughter, Virginia Butler Dixon. The Beach Master is her brother, young Pierce, at present in the Navy in the Pacific, having something to do about landing with several of the different invasion forces on the several islands.

Roane is the lady who comes off second best in the other references, particularly as regards her little house down on Beverly, etc. I don't recall anything not particularly clear in Mr. Pipes' letter. The reference to him and me doing an illustrated article on Cane River is pertinent, I think.

It has seemed to me but fair to write him regarding the faint possibilities as to Nubia, for when Rosenwald says No to his current application, - as I feel almost assured Rosenwald will, thanks to the influence of the author of the Bayous, Mr. Pipes will be casting about for plans for the immediate future. IF, - and it is a big one, - if Nubia should come to hand, it would provide him with a pleasant situation, although a little primitive until something is realized on some of the current things holding their breath, - publications, I mean. His presence here, however, would afford me some opportunity to do some things during the ensuing year which otherwise would have to be left undone. In the event things should work out that way, it will be nice to have someone living on the place while I retain my residence here for an indefinite period, - at least until some XXXX source of income begins to perk. Then, too, he will afford a pleasant nucleus around which a rather pleasant group may eventually grow up in the future.

The only drawback, and there is one, - is the fact that "a cause de la jalousie" of last summer, his local hostess so thoroughly discredited him in the eyes of everyone of the immediate household that it will take a little time to wear that down. The former hostess, however, seems to have done a right-

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about face, - even as in the case of Mrs. Moore, while at the same time, her antipathy for the author of the Bayous has mounted accordingly, but on entirely different grounds, apparently. Today a blistering letter went forward to the Bayous, forbidding him to use her or her neighborhood in his forthcoming book. That seems altogether unwise to me, but that is in reality no affair of mine.

After hazarding the thought in my last report, - or second from the last, the high water came along and so disrupted the mails that I feel quite sure you were not inconvenienced by too many missiles arriving, one on top of the other. At the present writing, it would seem as though the Red River levee on the back of Melrose will hold, by dint of strenuous labor in the sandbag department. For the first time in a week, the river is not rising at Shreveport, 100 miles to the North, and it is expected that it will not increase much more here, - unless the promised rains for tonight should be excessive.

The gardens, or at least the flowers, are really wonderful at the moment, and I so much wish you might be here to share their composite perfumes. A lot of tall lilies and no crinums are at their best, the roses, bushes are heavy with blossoms, with faint peonies for flavor and magnolia forscati for pungency, along with siringa for intensity and beauty bushes for explosions of milk-like showers. Louisiana is so lovely at this season, in spite of its excesses in fragrance and shadings. Somehow it reminds me of what, or rather the three words which someone once said were the prize combination ever made by J. Edgar Allen Poe: "the violet and the vine".

After all, here we have the mocking bird and the wren for the viol, the violet and tons of other flowers for the second requisite, and this, being a dry Parish, we have plenty of fruit of the vine, seeming the more precious, I suppose because it is verboten.

Eventually, - - - - -

The only drawback, and that is a serious one, is the fact that the water is so high that it is impossible to get to the river at all. The water is so high that it is impossible to get to the river at all.

1147

April 13th, being Friday. 1905

Memorandum:

April 12th. No one can remember grandiflora magnolias blooming much before the first of May on Cane River. April 12th, 1945, and today they opened their great ivory globes, lovely to look at and almost nostalgic of some forgotten Eden, all released to man again through the medium of their marvelous perfume.

April 12th, and the flood waters reached their highest point at Melrose. It was well that I had moved the camellias from the margin of yesterday's seepage. Their former places now went under water. Along the river road, usually a dozen feet about the surface of the river, the water now lapped at the edge of the dusty thoroughfare. A little way down the road by the Spillway, a torrent of water had taken the highway from its former situation, sweeping it off into nothingness in the swirling waters, and cutting off Clemence's house and the tent city of refugees beyond the spillway itself. The only communications with Clemence and the tent city is by boat, and it is somewhat risky to negotiate the flood tide at the moment.

April 12th and a great man died. The Civil War was hard on the South. But because Mr. Lincoln died, the South was wrecked by Reconstruction, when the Government passed into the hands of lesser men. May it please God that history may not repeat itself when similar circumstances are applied to a global pattern.

When world problems, too vast or too complicated for my understanding, were in the hands of the President, I could relax from worry on such matters, feeling, as I did, that they were in the hands of one whom mankind could trust. With his death, that feeling of assurance has evaporated, and I am called upon, as a citizen of the world, to transfer my faith, - from a human instrument of the Almighty to God Himself.

To some of the untutored darkies, the news that Mr. Roosevelt had died meant nothing. To many of them, the name of Roosevelt signified nothing. In their minds, the Government or the Governor, the President and Uncle Sam are all the same person, and the name Roosevelt for many of them is just another name.

Do you suppose on the night of the crucifixion, someone mentioned the death of Jesus to say, possibly, the brother of Lazarus, and the brother, for whom Christ had done so much, didn't even recognize Christ's name?

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It is so good to receive report, even though the mails are a little leisurely these days. The air mail, as from New York, bearing a Sunday date line, arrived here on the following Saturday. By the time another week has elapsed, I reckon the truck service for mail transportation, will be properly organized so that communication will be effected with greater dispatch.

I enclose a map of the Red River area, which is probably not so good as many you have already seen. This will illustrate, however, the curious way we were suddenly surrounded by the floods. I have placed an X indicating approximate location of this place. An arrow from the grand core neighborhood indicates how the water, seeping through, filled in the area, West of this place, between Cane River and Montrose, with 4 or 5 feet of water, some 2 or 3 miles in breadth. Then the arrow, just South of Natchitoches shows where the levees crumbled, and torrents of water swept down on us. - on the East bank of Cane River from the North-East. The third arrow, in the Gulf area, indicates where the levees crumbled again, spilling Red River to the South East of us, and backing up the flood to connect with the volume of water already bearing down on us from the North East. At this writing the water seems about stationary. It laps the road along the river, and comes up to the garden fence in back of Elrose, but there is a narrow strip about 2 miles in length along the highway where the water will not come, varying in width, - the dry part, from 500 feet to 1,000 yards. We are blocked off from the rest of the Parish, and of course everything between this community back to Red River, whence stretches this plantation, is under water, varying in depth from a foot to possibly 10 feet.

Down the road, the noisey bag is making a great racket, and as usual, telling historical tales, but although water comes up close to that town, it has never reached the highway where she dwells, and gradually, it will recede.

Surrounded as we are by thousands of acres of flood land, with the River sweeping by the place in a swift current, one is bound to see curious sights. Great pecane trees in full leaf, float majestically along, or a dead cow, or, as I

about on a storm, my mind was
long range plans, were by one or two people, too long tossed
of itself. In the mean time, my head and my heart are busy in
than usual. My absence from here might do a lot of harm all

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noticed the other day, a dead horse, still bearing his saddle. Further up the road a neat little house, - from somewhere above Grand Moore, came into view, floating quietly along, as though it were the most natural thing in the world. The thing that made it seem so weird were the dainty white ruffled curtains in the upper windows, moving gently in the breeze, and the potted geranium, in full flower, gracefully decorating the window ledge between the gently waving curtains.

With hundreds of square miles hereabouts under water, the reptile department, of course, is working over time, since those things have no place to go, save in the trees. When the waters subside, I trust it will make lots of room for the super-abundance with which we are now possessed. As reptiles go, moccasins would never take a prize for their beauty, and when one encounters, - thanks to the flood, a couple of old blunt-tail moccasins, perhaps but 2 feet long, but three inches thick, the dirty gray hide, seemingly moss grown, really isn't prettified from the low lands, whenever possible to save them, we are driven up here, and now they are confined within quickly constructed fences within a limited space, while calves and hogs roam the roads at random. One of the minor casualties in my garden was painfully evident when a big old sow nosed her way through the picket fence, tromped down by butterfly lilies, surrounding the big old iron sugar pot, - an item some 5 feet across and 3 feet deep, shaped like a cup. When I discovered her, she had eaten up all my gold fish, and was complacently sitting in the midst of the pot, her front feet resting over the side. I certainly regretted the loss of the gold fish, but the sow was such a sight that I nearly fell out laughing.

A cable from Rio indicates a flight to Paris on Tuesday, for a stay for a month with the possibility of a southern appointment. I have had no communication, - by my own expressed wish, - during the past twelfth month, because of an incident following his resignation in Pearl Harbor days. At that time, Vichy, when unable to force officers of the Government to remain within the organization, trumped up charges against all who resigned, and if such people chanced to be in this country, false charges against them were filed with F.B.I., which was both ridiculous and annoying. With things back to normal again, all that business has ceased, I suppose, and correspondence may be resumed without a lot of extra reading being required by that Bureau which, Heaven knows, is already too over-worked with real cases and not phoney ones.

Hemmed in, as we are at the moment, all thought of running over to Mississippi is out until the end of the month at least. With the temporary confusion and unusual demands put on J. B., I am not mentioning Nubia, particularly as the Estate lawyer is Secretary of the Levee Board, and up to his hips in pressing demands right now. I may skip mention of the business until after the Natchez interlude, where I might remain for a few days longer than usual. My absence from here might do a lot of talk all by itself. In the mean time, my head and my heart are busy in long range plans, where by one or two people, too long tossed about on a storm, unsympathetic sea, may find a haven of peace and labors of love that somehow will make life the more worth while...

1150

April 17th, 1945. Memorandum to Clipping Service: Your air mail report, dated April 2nd, came to hand in yesterday's post. Thank you much. I deeply appreciate your concern for our physical safety. We are quite safe, although considerably hedged in. At the moment, I think we are cut off from the outside world by all save boats and air planes, - of which an ample supply is concentrated in this area.

There have been some personal losses, but insignificant, so far as losses are measured by usual standards. There were some papers, - personal ones, - which for one reason or another, I had housed in the home of a friend, some distance from here. It is my understanding, - although the facts await confirmation, - that that house has floated away. If this be true, then those papers are gone, but they aren't of first magnitude in the general scheme of things, and one has so much to mourn in this April of 1945, that these little personal things really don't amount to a row of pins.

It is heartening to realize that Melrose proper and Nubia have proven themselves too high for waters to reach the gardens and the buildings. It is said that in 1849 there was considerable high water in these parts, but nothing like it since. After this turmoil is over, the levees will be made stronger than ever and probably not even in another century will there be anything like it. Even so, it is pleasant to realize that the high ground of Melrose and Nubia have withstood, - with dry feet, the present inundation.

As indicated in my last report, I have let the matter of Nubia slide momentarily. What with so many concerns pressing those in control, it seems to me untimely to bring up the matter at the moment, especially as legal papers could scarcely be executed at the moment, since getting to town isn't too be thought of, save on matters of pressing import, - and Nubia can wait for a week or two. My position relative to that matter is that the thing should be terminated, - one way or the other, - during the present season, - if it is to be accomplished at all, and as soon as the waters have subsided and things approach a degree of normalcy, I shall ask for a Yes or No with all the legal formalities.

1151

As the radio announces further floods headed this way in the Arkansas River area, I am wondering what the next four months will be like. Within a couple of weeks, I am looking for the Cane River section to be drying up, but I suppose high water in the Mississippi will hold up the flow of Red River and the Ouachita (?) River, which may delay direct travel to Natchez. Of the latter trip, I should much like to make use of it, as a kind of example of retirement, should the Nubia matter tend to drag. But we shall cross those rivers when the time arrives, and perhaps there may be no need for such a crossing.

With the mails so unpredictable at the moment, I am wondering if la Haygood may have written regarding her intentions to come here. She couldn't make it at the moment, but I feel certain that the floods will have sufficiently subsided by the 1st of May so that train service will be resumed.

Did I tell you that I wired la Essae Mae, suggestion that she communicate with Miss Ramsey immediately, - assuming she had her New York address, with a view to having Life send her here by plane to get color film records of Cane River during and after the high water? I know not if anything will come of that.

I haven't told James that the manuscript he forwarded me by express has not come to hand as yet, - the one I wanted to call to the attention of la Haygood. I assume express marked for Derry is probably being held in Shreveport or Natchitoches, since there is no train service here, and I presume it will come through in due time. After all, Express is pretty safe. Then, too, there is no rush about getting the manuscript anyway, since no one knows about la Haygood.

Yesterday Alexandria had a 4 inches rain, - an inch of rain, you will recall, represents 60 tons to the acre. I am certainly glad the water dropped down from the skies below rather than above us.

Must skip along. I apologize for a dumb letter, but thought the fact that one was sent might re-assure you as to the security of our present situation, as they used to say in ante bellum days. I shall always treasure the remark regarding the wish to share together even the disasters. So often has that been manifested in the past, so often during the present. How pleasant to think that they are gradually, one by one, being shared now, and that when Nubia comes into focus, and Meade Villa, the hazards will be exhausted and Heaven will be on hand. May I add that Nubia is but a convenience in my mind, as a name. I like Arenbourg so much. The first four letters mean so much to me, - "sicost-Ettal, - L'Etat, - c'est moi....."

1152

April 19th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The post man was kind yesterday, for he brought me a report, dated Friday, the 13th. As this came through on regular postage, - April 13th to April 18th, the time lag, under present circumstances, does not seem excessive.

The fact that this report came through on a fair schedule. I am hoping that out-going ones may enjoy a similar facility in delivery.

I must say it was so incidental that in the last report I forwarded before the lapse, I should have remarked that I would keep correspondence fluid! It looks as though Fate had turned them from a fluid stage to an old wet one.

With things swirling so fast and so uncertainly here for a few days, - and with the realization that mail just wasn't being picked up by the postman at this office, it is quite possible that I did not write many letters. To be perfectly frank, I cannot recall if I jotted down on paper a lot of the thoughts going through my mind, - there were so many interruptions and so many demands breaking in on the usual routine. By now, however, I reckon things should be pretty well in order and from here on out, we might expect normal deliveries, I should think.

Did I tell you that I wired Essae Mae the other day, asking her to communicate directly with Caroline Ramsey that the present Cane River situation offered a wonderful opportunity for her color camera, and suggesting that she make the most of it, - so that she would have a double set of photographs, and articles, - illustrating and contrasting how things appeared during the flood and after the country had returned to normalcy. In an accompanying note, I told her I had but Miss Ramsey's Morgan City, La., address, - which is General Delivery, where mail is held for her when she returns to her house boat, but the point of getting word to her right away was the fact that she was in New York, - address unknown, dicke ing with Life and Saturday Evening Post. Well, a response came from The Lady of the Commission yesterday, wherein she said, in compliance with the wire, she had forwarded it by mail to General Delivery, Morgan City, La. Really!

Well, that lets the color films of the flood out alright, but there is at least the satisfaction that one had made a gesture anyway.

over

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There was, in the same letter yesterday, a reference to la belle C.'s recent visit to the Crescent City, made specifically to see how things were going with Old Man River. Little Miss A. had reported by letter, 2 weeks ago, that that gentleman had told her he was departing for parts unnamed with valet and secretary. Miss C. telephoned the hotel but was told the gentleman had left word at the desk that he was out of town and would not return until April 17th. By chance, Miss C. met a friend in the street who reported having been at a party at the hotel last Sunday, where the host appeared in a very precarious situation, so far as health was concerned, - a state not unlike that obtaining just before he went to the hospital last time. The Madam fears suicide eventually or a prolonged period of incapacity. Only time will tell, of course, but anyway you look at it, it doesn't appear very rosey.

The local flood situation appears to be improving. Curiously enough as water falls in one section, it seems to rise in another, due to additional breaks in the levees at different points, I suppose, or local showers in one area or another, feeding into a particular section. Paradoxically enough, we are beginning to need rain quite badly for the gardens, even though the flood waters are lapping at the edges of the hedges. I like that, - "edges of the hedges". Well, anyway, on this particular pin-point, it hasn't rained since April 1st, and things are dry, dry. Anyet, water is so near that only yesterday, I jumped over the vegetable garden fence where a boat was tied, got in it and rowed for a mile across one time cotton fields, and was depressed enough to encounter plenty of pigs, dogs, cows and horses in various stages of exhaustion, - and the carcasses of those who had succumbed. I rescued a few, but it there isn't much point in trying, for the resistance is adamant, and horses, in particular, which have been brought to dry ground here along the river, if left unfenced, will head slap into the water, - walking as far as they can, and then swimming from there on out until they reach the site of their former homes, now under several feet of water. There they will mill around, the depth too great for them to touch bottom, and then eventually sink below the surface of the muddy waters from sheer exhaustion. It is a mighty curious business, I must say. While on the general subject of disaster, however, I must say that the Red Cross has been perfectly efficient and noble in this whole matter, and if ever I hear that organization criticised, I shall always think back to this experience.

It was sweet of you to think of me in regard to a copy of the Times, detailing the calamitous events of the past week end. I shall treasure the copy, - unless it is lifted for the Melrose file. I think the Madam has written about the Sunday edition. Our news came to hand by radio and up to now has been fulsome, but lacking the lasting and reference qualities that are embraced by news print. If only we might, - but eventually we shall, explore su h records as one.....

1154

April 20th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The enclosed letter is from Mrs. Brandon, - nothing of especial interest, save that she is a good egg, and I thought the little poem at the end very nice.

A letter today from Miss Robina, advising that yesterday she had received a flock of letters from Melrose, - apparently quite an accumulation which had been posted from time to time, but held hither and yon by the situation arising from the flood.

If Shreveport mail got through yesterday, then there is hopes that you will have something to hand this week end, and that thought of that makes me feel very happy, for the long absence of news, - especially when the press, although reporting, - has been unsatisfactory, has made the gap between seem rather long.

From this point on, I should imagine, deliveries should be more prompt, even though there has been no resumption of train service, and probably will not be for another couple of weeks.

An interruption on the part of the radio, however, has been a letter in yesterday's post from little Miss A., which indicates she thinks old man river is "in parts unknown", flanked by a secretary and valet, and she feels confident that he is getting along fine. As indicated in yesterday's Memorandum, however, we, in reality, know that instead of being "in parts unknown" he is actually right in her midst and not doing too bad. At the Madam's request, I telegraphed her, suggesting a circuitous route through the Western Louisiana hills by which means, - "in a roundabout" fashion, she could head in toward here, to resume her magnolia painting, etc.

Although the radio did not report high winds in Norman, I think it must have carried off all stationary, since I haven't heard from that direction in well over a week, - although I suppose there may be messages clogged en route, somewhere between Shreveport and Natchitoches.

(over)

1155

Of the flood situation, there is a local aspect which hinges upon geographic and political points which probably are passed over by the press. Some 15 or 20 miles above here, at Grand Ecore, there is a sharp right angle turn in Red River, and another one at Colfax some 20 miles below this point, that is below Melrose. While at Shreveport, Red River has dropped some 12 feet, the same river, between the two right angle turns, with Melrose about half way between, hasn't fallen any, and accordingly it would appear we might be all set to remain an island in this newly created lake for a month or two. Were the Mississippi to be lowered considerably, then Red River could drain into it, and our "lake" would disappear. The Government however is being pressed by citizens in South Louisiana not to open the Morganza spillway on the lower Mississippi. In constructing that spillway, the Federal Government purchased lands from the river to the Gulf for the water to pass over, when circumstances required opening the spillway. But private individuals, although the property belongs to the Federal Government, is or are using that strip of land for cattle grazing, and they don't want their fine herds disturbed. Their political henchmen are busy screaming how criminal it would be to open the Morganza spillway when there is not a valid reason for so doing. According to reports from the weather and engineering divisions, a new crest will arrive "below Natchez" about the 2nd of May, meaning of course that the river from now until some time after that will be so high that Red River cannot flow into it, meaning further, naturally, that millions of acres in this area will retain their present aspect of a mill pond.. So things turn in these damp places.

It was good of you to let me have the notation regarding the Dutton series, inaugurated by The Philadelphians. It sounds like another indication of anticipated demand for Americana when the present world excitement is finished. When Water Frase has said No to The Old Louisiana Scrapbook, possibly we should submit it to old Dutton to say Yes. At the moment I consider template doing the column idea as a piece of Americana, which I have so long felt would lead itself to such an opus very readily. At the moment, however, I must mark time, but eventually that can be gone into and whipped into shape.

I have a feeling we ought to be hearing from Ellis Avenue pretty quick. Perhaps I can do better so far as interest in a flock of things goes before long.....

(over)

1156

April 23rd, 1945. -
Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To hand three letters, all at a single sitting, together with a copy of the magazine containing the article on old Blennerhasset, - and may I say thanks a million for one and all.

It seems as though they have been leisurely in traveling along the route, but I am re-assured and my heart made glad, just to know the post is functioning again, and that from here on out, we shall probably find communications sliding along more promptly.

It was sweet to read what you had to say about the several items coming to hand at the close of last month, and I am happy because you are.

In your note, referring to a splinter of a thought, there was just a little cloud, justified, no doubt, because of circumstances which block the view of a turn in the road a little way ahead.

Please, - and I urge you with all my heart, don't give those road-blocks too much thought. At the moment they interpose, and can not be circumvented, - not at the moment. But as yet the actual road-block hasn't been encountered, - we have merely become conscious that it is ahead and is something that seems to threaten the view at the time when we are in sight of the view itself. But long before then, - or possibly at just about then, the block, - by some miracle which I know not and am incapable of imagining, will somehow dissolve and the depths of shadows which have tended to be-cloud the sunshine before reaching, - and surmounting, - the obstacle, will have turned out to be shadows which we would have as well ignored as we passed through them.

This is my honest opinion, - enormous impossibilities, - at the final moment, give way before the sheer force of thought in all good time. If we want anything quite a lot, we somehow begin concentrating on it, - not the impossibilities that intervene, that less stout hearts would never have dared to hope for, - but daring to hope, the thing is bound to come to pass, if we just keep right on devoting our thought to it as though it were an actuality to be realized in good time, - and as sure as preaching, the thing somehow occurs, - not always as we would have planned it, not always in precisely the manner we envisioned it, but nevertheless the desired thing is realized and, coming to think about it, it often happens that those very things which, at the moment seem dreadful tragedies to us, in the end turn out to be but episodes which in the end we are even thankful to God for their wisdom or rather His wisdom in making them happen. (over)

1157

Off hand, I can think of quite a few things which have happened to those I love and to myself, things which at the time seemed to be dreadful things, and yet somehow subsequent events have somehow given me the light to see that in the general scheme of things, they were so much better that way, and even though we regret some of them, - and always will, still, without them, our peace of mind might have been so different today. And what goes for today, goes for tomorrow, too.

How often, - and I apologize for making reference to it, do I recall that prolonged conspiracy of silence, - and even more, - the circumstances that occasioned it. And yet now, in view of all that has transpired since then, how glad I am that since it had to happen, it did happen, - the circumstances x causing the conspiracy, - for while those were soul-trying times, what peace and thanksgiving there is in my soul, - and how much more in yours, - that those events, - if they had to transpire, - happened when the did, and not a few years later when (interruption) - when travel had become impossible, or later, when the necessities and comforts, then available, would have not only become impossible, but even the mere thought of one, - even though in perfect health, would have been so fraught with misery because of the horrible uncertainty.

Today, in quite another situation, we think we discern a roadblock down anotherwise altogether pleasant prospect. But in reality, the roadblock will automatically take on nothing more of substance in the mind than a shadow that will evaporate if we can but hold faith in tomorrow's sunrise. I don't know how some such things can be solved. More than once in the past ten years have I gone to bed, feeling that the new dawn would see me up against an impossible wall, - and yet, somehow, and by some miracle, the next day the impassable barrier turned out to be as thin as paper, or the shadow, threatening to turn aside everything that seemed important, had disappeared. Not always that it has done so by magic or by its own volition, but so often God seems to have managed it so that the much desired prospect was no longer hidden from view, and the faith I had in God and Man burned so bright in consequence that it made my next obstacle so much easier, - my faith in good things coming true that I would be less than a friend if I did not try to share a little bit of my faith that covers the same subject will really come true. Be of good cheer, I pray you. Life is worth while if one has something to look forward to, and I am convinced your share of Paradise is still awaiting you on this side of life.

Thanks for telling me you heard from Mr. Pipes. I haven't, and was a little worried. I suppose his correspondence will come through shortly. And thanks for anticipating my wishes in the matter of the articles by Mary Hodges. I think you, too, will like the Cherry Cape. I think it the best. The Julip character is such a perfect picture of Lyle, he always declared it embarrassed him to read it. Mrs. Lemnox Stanton, former Mrs. James Surget, died about the time the article appeared, and Lemnox was just an old Julip....

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great, great grandmother was also one of the Ellis girls, and so the correspondence, exchange of family secrets, inheritances, etc., were added this third segment of the Ellis, Mercer, Young desiderata. Isn't it maddening to realize the existence of all these things and yet be powerless to do anything to stave off their loss to the world?

But let's speak of happier things. Your nice letter with typed enclosures came to hand in good order and I relished every line. Wasn't the withholding from print of Mrs. Roosevelt's article a surprise? And how thrilling was the account of the discovery of the Titian beneath the surface of a nondescript painting. I have always thought that sometime we might find the role of paintings, pintail duck, portrait of his wife, etc., which Audubon lost on the landing at Natchez Under the Hill. Somehow I have always felt some of these might turn up locally as the backing or the mat of some old chromo that someone of the 1820's had framed and forgotten, leaving the item or items to desecrate some wall in a forgotten mansion in the Natchez District somewhere or other.

In my note of yesterday, I intended to mention one little out-cropping of folk lore, as revealed by Clemence the other night when I sat by her lamp light, examining the treasures which had come to her from afar in the form of raiment. I thought I had dropped a piece of cloth on the floor, where it lay hidden in the heavy shadow. But reaching down to catch it up, I discovered that it wasn't cloth, but a coal black kitten. This kitten, so black in hue, replaces the pure white one she had during the summer.

We both laughed at my error, and I remarked upon the decided contrast in color between the one animal and the other.

"A black cat brings good luck, so the old folks used to say," Clemence confided. "But a black cat alive won't do you no good. What the old folks used to say was that you had to pick the black cat up alive by the tail and drop him in a pot of boiling water. There you had to keep him until he had cooked-cooked. And then, after a long, long time, after he had all cooked away, the white bones would fall away, and then you would take out the white bones and you would dry them and keep them in your pocket where ever you went and then you would always have good luck. But me, I don't like t eatin' a cat, - black or white, like that. I 'd soon trust to my own luck."

interruption

over

The enclosure from Miss Rotina speaks for itself. The Madam sent her a box of candy the other day, and in response this letter came through. I send it for this latest account of the Dornon doings. They certainly lead a charmed life, and neither mules nor horseless carriages seem to have more than a swooning effect on them. We haven't heard from them in weeks. Perhaps this episode in Miss Rotina's letter accounts for that.

Another interruption, and I had better fold for this sitting. This coming week end will see the reviews of the new Kane opus, I suppose. I shudder when I think what things may, - but fortunately, probably will not, be mentioned in regard to Chapter 16. Dr. Altin, a tree specialist of distinction, who spends some time here from time to time, working on the pecaness, read the chapter the other night. Accustomed as he is to hearing people of maturity and tose held in respect, refered to as Mr. or Miss., was under the impression on reading the chapter that "Leudivine" was the Madam's father, - and the man who established the school at Natchitoches, whereas Miss Leudivine, of course, never had anything do to with the nixx thing. I must gallop.....

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April 26th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The arrival of two more communications establishes the fact that normalcy has been restored in mail deliveries. I am certainly thankful. Surely the cutting off of direct communications was a disturbing element, not only from the point of view that the receiving end of the water front was distressed because of the black out, but also because of the realization that one could not help feeling sympathy for those who could glean but scant pictures from the press as to precisely what situation obtained at this point, and of course half news or no news in times of such disasters is worse than bad news, - and fortunately there was no bad news that could be honestly set down from here.

- I like the little notes that have been coming to hand of late. It's nice to think of half moments being grabbed off whenever they appear, and it is good to realize that the risks of interruptions, always present in a formally spaced letter are thus obviated. Now I mean to try to keep up a regular correspondence. It is good of you to refer to your pleasure in receiving communications, as of the last of March and more concentrated about the middle of the month. I am relieved of the fear that the advent of too many might somehow embarrass. Unless you express the desire that I discontinue such frequent epistles, or hold them into batches, I shall send them along at about the same rate as of late. Somehow the day gets started better if one is able to chat with a kindred soul.

As second class matter comes a day or two after first class, we shall no doubt be receiving the Times which you mention in your note. I know we are going to enjoy it greatly. As for the clippings that come to hand, I sometimes get some of them read to me, - those addressed to the Madam and me, - and sometimes I don't, - depending upon the strength of the lady when they arrive. Frequently she holds them until she reclines on her sofa after dinner, prior to a nap, and in that event I miss them. Accordingly, I am delighted to have the very special ones, - such as Madam Eleanor's come to me directly. I am holding the latter, by the way, for reading today, although it arrived some days ago. The fact is that Mr. Brew has arrived so late from school during the past three days, that what with Mr. Bacheller here and one or two other demands, my time has been so limited at the close of day that I have read nothing but the direct communications.

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We have not had an opportunity to explore the Blennerhasset article as yet, but I know I am going to enjoy it thoroughly, and I am under the impression that we may eventually be able to sue it in the Old Mississippi Scrapbook. At the moment, the magazine is in the Madam's room, but I shall subsequently borrow it and include it with my Mississippi material.

What with things turning as they appear to be, it would seem as though Nubia- Arenbourg might come to hand before long. As soon as autumn comes and I am able to fix up the cottage there temporarily, I will first of all prepare a place for our books and papers, and in the event you should have treasures for safe keeping, I would suggest that these be sent at that time, when they may be placed directly in our library, to avoid having them "buried" at this place. Looking at things in a rather long-ish fashion, I would think we might begin to give thought to concentrated subjects for the library of Arenbourg, - probably stressing Mississippi and Louisiana, with a general widespread on the thousand and one other subjects which will always be of pleasure to us in the years ahead.

The enclosed photo, - which I should have mentioned before to this far in the Memorandum is of Peter Mettoyer, Junior, - who as the photo indicates, got quite a heavy coloring from the negro side of his ancestors. On the day I was snapping the photos, already forwarded you, he asked me if I would take a picture of him and his horse. I would, and as I had but a single film left, I tried to arrange it so I would get not only Peter and his horse, but also the cabin of Arenbourg where Peter and his papa and his two brothers are currently living. I reckon the photo doesn't show much of la maisonnette, but it gives an impression. As I envision it, the maison de la Reine will eventually occupy the space just behind the pecan tree to the rear of Peter's horse, - and will face at right angles to the present cabin. The latter now faces due West, and la maison de la Reine, I think, should eventually face South or at least South West.

Mr. Bachelier has walked over to Arenbourg with me. He thought it rather smaller than he anticipated at first, and then later, he thought it a little larger, - perhaps 2 acres in all. Well, larger or smaller, it can be classed as our "God's half acre", and if we hold to our dreams steadfastly, it is going to be a haven and a heaven in the years to come. On your suggestion, I am writing Ellis Avenue today, explaining that the floods are not increasing and that it is possible to get to this bend in the river without getting one's feet wet. If old Mr. Rosenwald comes through, I thought to be able to get la maisonnette fixed up, - a room or two, that is, so tight that it will serve us well to house our treasures, awaiting the advent of royalty checks when materials will be available and normally priced so that la maison de la Reine may take on form.

1162

April 27th, 1945.
Memorandum to Clipping Service:-
Thirty five million communications could not have meant more to me than the receipt of your air mail report with its several enclosures. Kindness is a wonderful quality but even greater is anticipating, - and although I have put off the thought of going to Mississippi for an indefinite period, - surely for two or three weeks, at least, it is grand to have your several reports to hand, and especially as the Arenbourg-Nubia business might come to the boiling point in the interim, and it will be so good to have the security measures to hand in consequence. May I say Bless You, and how delighted I am to have such a thoughtful expression for the birthday department, - especially as it may well be applied to our foundation stones on the permanent structure we are jointly raising?

There were so many things in your report that interested me that I shall refer to them in the order they appeared. Having heard nothing from Mr. Pipes regarding to items now cooking, I am indebted to you for having advised me concerning the points that have come to hand. In response to the note from him, - forwarded to you yesterday, - recommended that he write me without delay, as it has been ever so long, as you will recall, since I have heard from him. He says, believe, that it takes about a week for my notes to reach him. About as long a period is required for his responses to reach me, - so I guess I would have been pretty much in the dark about the doings, - Random House, and all, had you not shared the information with me. Thank you much.

I appreciate your reaction to visiting abroad, and especially to feel as you do, since I feel exactly the same way. I want to remember the pleasant things abroad, and as they were formed and imprinted on my mind before all the present doings, I want to keep them as they were, for in that way they will remain treasures for me that a subsequent visit would only blot out and at the same time rob me of the pleasant harmonies which continue, and will continue to illuminate my memory. Things abroad supplied one with a splendid background by which this continent may be the better appraised and appreciated. Its ideas, its Arts, its positive aspirations, observed and absorbed over a period of years, may furnish a medium that will provide greater appreciation for those things which we find about us in another land and another civilization. Europe, like the pleasant

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memories of childhood can supply us with thoughts, memories and inspirations which will beautify and make more precious, the fuller years of our maturity. But no one, I think, would want his childhood back again, since the hardships and the disappointments were sufficiently in evidence as to make one hesitate about attempt re-living the pleasureable periods at the cost of the unpleasant things that had to be endured. But if we are smart enough to select and hold tight to the good, and work that into the mosaic of the pattern of maturity, and making those fragments glow the brighter by throwing away, - even from the memory, - those darker and less desirable portions of the earlier pattern, - then life will be the happier. Europe of yesterday is good as a memory and for the good that it contributed. But today a grander span of years lies ahead. Europe, unfortunately, but very definitely is a horrible trash basket of human debris, alright for those who from an idealistic standpoint want to do something about it, - or from a ghoulish impulse, want to glimpse its ruin and its debacle. For myself, I don't. After all, even as in Europe, so in America, there is endless opportunity to do a lot of things for a lot of people, and shouldn't we, if we feel the American impulse, retain our pleasant memories of years past in Europe and devote our current and future energies to that section of the continent of North America, - and that section of its inhabitants appealing to us, -

In short, I have taken a lot of words to say that I get your point of view and that I heartily subscribe.

The April 13th issue of the New York Times and PM reached the "adam in yesterday's mail and she was withal enchanted at your thoughtfulness. She read some of the things to me, and I enjoyed listening to these excerpts. I have thought so often as to how "Madam Eleanor may emerge as a public figure. I have a feeling she may loom large on the American scene within the next few years. Isn't it grand to have a public figure whom one can admire so much and be permitted to observe in public print the course that figure maintains in spite of all.

I have but a few moments alone these days, for Mrs. Bachelier, - here until "unday, comes here early in the day, and sticks with me until sundown. Yesterday we walked along the River to observe what the flood tide had done to the terrace at Arenbourg. It ate into the banks some 6 or 8 feet in places, with cavings quite bad, but not devastating, but to be regretted. The photo which you have of the terrace was taken a week before the floods came, so that the river has risen about 8, 10 or 12 feet, since then. But it is beginning to return to more normal levels now, and will probably never mount so high again. ... Thirty-five million times would I say thanks to you for your unfailing reports. How firm a foundation such reports will help to construct, both in physical and spiritual things.....

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May 1st, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Since dawn this morning, I have written so many letters for the darkies, - to friends and relatives far and near, - giving accounts of the flood, that I seem to be about run down, so far as writing anything for myself, - and time appears to have about run out, too, ere the advent of the postman.

But I do want to say that your letter of the 24th came to hand in yesterday's post, and that I appreciate it with all my heart. I was not alone as I walked along the river road last night about the time the moon rose. A feeling that a spirit was along side, sharing my thoughts and joining me in my communion with God in endless unspoken prayers of thanksgiving for a soul, so much a counter-part that it made the present and the absent elements into a perfect unit.

Nothing new concerning Arenbourg, but there may be ere long. I hesitate to insist on the matter, in view of all the circumstances, and yet at the same time it will afford one much satisfaction to know that little matter is all wrapped up.

It goes without saying that both the Madam and I were enchanted with the grand clippings which came to hand in the same mail as the other report. We immediately set to reading "My Day" and of course immediately found ourselves be-moaning the fact that the clipper was not present to share in our enthusiasms for such a grand person. I believe the Madam is taking pen in hand today to say Thank You, but she may not, - one never knows how one day will find her, and how the next.

She had a letter from Harnett Kane yesterday, asking if he left a negative of Melrose in a book, recently returned. He began his letter by saying: "Can you or someone turn through the book I recently returned"... Etc. Under the circumstances, - and how well he knows it, - whom could the "someone" be but me, - and I think that manner of expressing himself is correct, since it indicates nothing so much as an absence of any finesse.

(over)

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Naturally, - during the past years, and even more so these later days, - like you, my mind has often pondered on the whereabouts of one person or another far away. In the event that you should have news as to how fares la pongs I know you will pass along the news. Sometimes I find myself hoping that she may have been spared all that the world, and especially her world, has had to go through, - sometimes the more so, it would almost seem, since she may have set a higher store on some of its aspects than others. She gave me an ash tray the last time there was any contact, - you will recall, and it is curious how something like that can maintain such a vibrant symbol.

I shall be writing more later, perhaps, - but I must skip at the moment.
Later: -

I learn that yesterday the railroad ran a trial train from Alexandria to Shreveport, over the Texas and Pacific Line, service this area. In some places, the track is under three to four feet of water. This must be something of a hazard, what with the possibility of the bed of the track being softened in many places where the eye cannot detect it. But apparently the tracks held firm, and it is said that an approach to normal service may be resumed shortly. This will bring little Miss Alberta into our midst, I suppose, and possibly la belle Haygood, - from whom we have heard nothing.

Did I mention above that a letter from Harnett came to hand yesterday. I should have remarked that it was dated from New Orleans, on April 15th, asking that a response be in his hands "on Monday, which would have been the 16th, I suppose, as that was the first Monday following. The next Monday would have been the 22nd, of course, but as the thing arrived on the 30th, I reckon the response which the Madam made, will be a little late in delivery.

I certainly want to thank you for your efforts in my behalf regarding direct communication with Miss Ramsey. I am curious how life felt inclined to hold out on the matter. Heaven knows you did your part, and I, for one, appreciate it heartily. Now, of course, it will be too late for the lady to record the high water, but there is still plenty of material along other lines for her to work on. Cane River Calamity might have afforded her something of a title for the flood business and a contrast with normal conditions, but that, of course, has taken its place in the limbo of things forever past. Thanks again for a million and thirty five things. I'm glad you weren't too disappointed in the photos.....

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Memorandum to Clipping Service: of Alabama and Georgia

You will agree with me that these two coincidences are remarkable:.....

April 12th, and the first great grandiflora magnolia of 1945 unfolded its lovely ivory petals, while at Warm Springs one of the great personalities of our age died.

May 1st, and the first gardenia of the season bloomed, while from Hamburg came the report of another personality passing.

In yesterday's mail came Manuscript and Prairie Schooner.

May I say thank you, and I shall keep them here before me on my desk for a while, just to call them to the attention of Mrs. Haygood, - if and when..... hey I shall set them aside for the library of Arenbourg, - how I love that name, -

The copies of the New York Times, addressed to the Madam, also arrived, and she has greatly enjoyed turning through them in part, and will continue to do more exploring, with me along beside, today, I hope.

A letter from the General arrived in the same mail, referring to his recent tour of France, his present point of writing, some 60 miles from Berlin, and his intention to tour Italy and the near East, prior to his return to Washington around about the 1st of June. He was kind enough to mention a wish that I were with him to make the tour, which I thought very nice, but that will shed no enthusiasm on la Grignan, I reckon, when she reads it.

At the moment the Arenbourg business simmers, although it appears pretty well concluded, save for the actual signing, which I am pushing as much as possible, even though I have agreed to take the thing over only after this year's crop has been harvested. The legal end of the transaction awaits the return of Arthur Watson, cousin and family lawyer, who attends to such transactions, - although there was never one like this one in the history of the family before. Mr. Watson is currently engaged in various

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parts of the flood area, - in the Shreveport area at present, as I understand it, doing something or other about Red Cross Administration, and the papers are awaiting his fixing. I reckon that might be any old time within the next 12th month.

The enclosed letter from Miss Robina really contains nothing of especial interest, save to indicate that she and Caroline Dornon must have covered a lot of ground last week end. I shall always remember the line she wrote in a letter to the "Adam, and forwarded to us in New York, - "By now, I suppose, the little colored boys are in the fig trees".....I don't know why that line so appealed to me unless it was that it somehow reminded me of a Rousseau painting or something of the Impressionistic school, so charming in simplicity and so striking in its coloring.

After the rest of Melrose had folded up, and the stars were beginning to twinkle last night, a tap came on my window. It was my little friend, King Solomon. He said Mr. Puny, his step papa, had found an old dime of 1854, and he wondered if I would like to pass by their cabin and look at it. I would. It was minted in Omaha, and of no numismatic value, I think, but "Mr. Puny" - Octave & Conti, Zelma, his wife Mother of little King) and Cy Young, a young man who is the latter's half brother were there, and we talked and we laughed for half an hour and had a good time generally. What they liked best was what I had to tell them about a big old turkey gobbler and a hen turkey who one day last week hatched out three little turkeys, which were shortly after taken from them and put in the brooder with some new little chickens. I should explain that in the case of turkeys, the gobbler is always very concerned over the welfare of his off-spring, and frequently gives a very attentive eye not only to the mother of his brood but also to the off-spring themselves. Well, it was first dark when the new little turkeys were put in the open air brooder, some three feet off the ground, and lighted with electricity, to keep the babies warm. Old Mr. Gobbler was all confused by the peepings of his offspring, some foot or so above his head, and as night settled down and the peeping maintained itself constantly, the old bird spent about three hours just strutting around and around the brooder, gobbling madly, dragging his wings, and seemingly to urge the rather plaintive hen, standing along side, to do something about her children. Finally I picked up the old gobbler and Miss Gobbler, and put them to bed in a chicken coop some distance beyond the sound of their children, and that was that. But the darkies loved the tale, - even though there was no particular point to it, and as Little King accompanied me part way across the cotton fields on my way home, he said: "I sure did like to hear you tell about that gobbler." - and somehow it was said so simply and somehow expressed so naturally, that I could not help pondering upon the ways, - and some of them curious, of these people who are so different and so trying and so maddening and so classically admirable.....

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Memorandum to Clipping Service:

And so old Mr. Rosenwald says :NO, - and I don't need the enclosed communication back.

It is disappointing, of course, what with the ideas I had in mind by way of doing some things for Arenbourg, but the classic man makes the most out of the materials at hand, and I shall be just as classic as I can.

You will laugh when I tell you that what I regret most is that I shall not be able to buy quite so big magnolias as I had hoped to next Spring. It was my idea to spend about 5 or 10 dollars apiece on them, and that would get us a good half dozen or so that would get the tapis vert in striking condition, - slap off. But now I shall plant smaller ones, and they will provide the pleasure of watching them grow a little longer before they reach their full height.

Eventually, I reckon, some of our current manuscripts will catch hold and will start paying off, and then we can do what we can to put things in order. But there is much to be thankful for, and if one were to have Rosenwald or Arenbourg, and not both, naturally Arenbourg is everything and Rosenwald merely a convenient along the road leading to the realization of the former.

I write you this note hurriedly because agents of the Government are here and are about to spray this house with D. D. T. solution, - some remarkable solution that kills all kinds of insects, and especially the malaria bearer, with great rapidity. We were not scheduled for this service in this locality until the floods came and gave us a special ruling. Obviously there is one advantage in all this dampness, and I thought I had better knock off this note to you before all the furniture is moved out of this place and the spray guns get to going.

I feel certain you join with me in feeling that Arenbourg is the thing and that old Mr. Rosenwald may be dismissed as so much spilled milk, - to be regretted naturally, but something which is much less important than other considerations seemingly now approaching their realization.....

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Before folding up this machine, I shall write a cordial
note to la Haygood, telling her that we are expecting her
to visit us during the current month. If one axe went haywire
on us, perhaps we can grind another of another metal.....

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May 5th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

No end of thanks for your nice letter, - even though the news
spoke of a health situation which I pray Heaven may be vastly
improved by the time I write these lines.

Obviously you have labored so heavily of late, with so many
thing to be kept in mind, that some kind of recuperation is bound
to be in order. I hope a lot of sunshine and a measure of relaxation
may be in store for you within the near future so that you may
begin building up again some of the energies which labor, both
at the office, at home and else where has robbed you of so constantly
during the past season.

It goes without saying that I was delighted to have the
clipping from Rachel Annan Taylor, and every line of it made me
think of a thousand happy moments, and the pictures arising in my
mind were so distinctly of one who was so pleasantly described
in those lines. I can't quote it directly, but somehow there
is the line somewhere or other on page xvi, as I recall, of the
Introduction or the Forward, - one or the other, for the book has
both, - something about someone being "on a heavenlier embassy", -
which even the fanatics for truth scarcely recognize, or even
care to inquire, - and when I think of the myriad good deeds flowing
from the soul of someone like the one who gave Arenbourg its name, then
what thanks I owe to God.

In yesterday's post came six or eight letters from our
friend in Oklahoma, only one of which I have had an opportunity
to read, as yet, and I enclose it her with.

I have in mind a half dozen other subjects on which I
would touch, but I must let them slide for the moment, but I shall
be back in the next post.

Of the Madam's health, I cannot say so much, - still deficient
in red corpuscles and that does all sorts of strange things. It
looks as though we might be heading into a summer not unlike
last year's, - and even as then, my own health seems to be
unusually good. I do hope your cold is ever so much better. I
shall practice patience during the interim of silence, and I would
urge you not to further exhaust yourself with correspondence when you
are up and about again. Knowing me, as you do, you realize I will
bless the silence for the measure of rest it is affording you.....

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1171

Memorandum to Clipping Service: May 7th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The week end was quiet enough in these parts, although the mails were heavy enough to fill in the lack of physical excitement.

A letter from Charles Azurette in New Orleans announced his return to this area next Saturday, - May 12th. I reckon he may stay several days with us at Melrose before heading out for Little River Farm, - some three or four miles back toward the Red River section. As yet one may get to Little River only by horseback or on foot, and I think Charles will prefer his buggy for traveling. Cars cannot run back there as yet, as there is no road, - following the irrigation project of January to April, plus the inundation of that month, - that is the latter named. Charles also wrote to one of his tenants to get his cisterns emptied and cleaned. They will need it, - what with the wild waters of Red River having passed over them, - and keeping them under water for two or three weeks. Charles is a grand soul, and ventually I shall speak to him of Arenbourg. Possibly, - eventually, - he will prefer to visit that place when it is established, instead of keeping himself so remotely situated as he when on Little River Farm. He suffers from heart attacks, and such a situation, entirely removed from telephone, etc., does seem to make it a little unwise for one who at almost any time might have need of a physician.

On Saturday, J. H. asked me if I would arrange to go to town with him one day this week to sign papers, etc., relative to Arenbourg. That most certainly will be a distinct pleasure, and I trust before the week has run out, I may give a further report on that point.

In Saturday's post came 6 or 8 letters from Oklahoma, together with some packages of paint and what-not, the letters for me, the packages for Clemence. I shall send the correspondence along to you as I digest it. There was also a copy of an Oklahoma City paper, carrying an or rather a reproduction of Clemence's painting, with a notation as to the artist. That was interesting.

1172

A random letter from New Iberia, Louisiana, mentioned that Mr. Saxon was in that South Louisiana town one day last week. Only that and nothing more. Strange business, all this reformation business.

No word at all from Little Miss Alberta.

Up to the present, I have shared the Arenbourg with two of my friends here, - Mr. Brew, as confidential reader, and Fugabou, expert tractor driver and all. Sometimes months go by without Fugabou and me bumping into each other, although he can see this house from his back gallery, and yet we are both always seemingly pretty delighted to bump into each other. In mentioning the possibility of Arenbourg to him, I asked him to keep an eye open for first class fence posts for a fence to be built this autumn, and also to cast an eye on the terrain where we shall employ his tractor to level off the grounds. After years of association, - he used to be the exclusive driver for Hatches journeys, Fugabou proved always to be one of those blessed with secret keeping propensities. He was thrilled at the Arenbourg idea, and first off, volunteered his wish to always put in a day at a stretch with his tractor on Arenbourg, - but always with the understanding that he was putting in his day because he liked me and was happy about Arenbourg, and that he always wanted to put in his labor on that basis. It was his way of saying that he didn't want any recompense for any labors on Arenbourg, for he wanted to be a part, and make his work a part of Arenbourg, - which was certainly sweet of him.

I have written Mr. Miller that I am thinking of a small plot of ground in the Melrose area, - with a view to fixing it up a little, - only that and nothing more. Dr. Miller may care to put some money in such a development. I haven't mentioned such a thing, nor will I. But should she volunteer, I shall give the matter consideration. With old Mr. Rosenwald saying "No", one must look about to see if other assets are available. Of course I shall borrow nothing, but in the event Mr. Miller should care to invest a little cash against a future cabin on Arenbourg, that might be something to consider, to get Arenbourg going, - although the less such possibilities need to be considered, the better, I think.

Mr. Pipes writes to me inquiring what I think about his taking up residence in Hatches shortly. I guess so, although I should prefer his advent at the time Arenbourg comes to hand, but we must let the various segments of the pattern fall into place as they will. I shall have more to say on all these points at a later sitting. Frankly, this entire report has been penned with points wholly secondary in my mind, for the primary thought prevailing my being is the state of health of a very good friend who has been on my mind throughout the entire week end. Please go slow.....

1173

May 8th at Melrose.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Merely a line to indicate I have the Service in mind, even though time is against filing a report before the postman makes his way to this office.

The past 24 hours have been fairly busy with little things, - correspondence to be done for the "adam, a hundred little details about the place to be looked into, and some attention paid to the march of events, as coming through on the radio.

The enclosed letter from Mr. Bachelier indicates how he found his garden, on returning to it, following the high water. The other enclosure may or may not have something of interest in it. I have read several of late, but got them mixed up and thinking you would like to keep abreast with them, am sending one at a time as they find a place under the succeeding envelopes.

I am thinking so constantly of the good health of those far away, and wishing a breath of Southern sunshine might somehow be available, just to see how it would agree. I think it would.

A severe electric storm last night, much wind, lots of rain and some hale stones. Yesterday the gardenia bushes were holding everything, - nice big fat buds, awaiting a little moisture. Last night they got it, and some of the bushes today are a symphony of blossoms and perfume. I think we should have plenty of them at Arenbourg, don't you?

Must gallop for the moment.....

1174

May 9th at Melrose.

Memorandum to "Clipping Service":

Salp in front of me, here on my desk, is about the loveliest miniature of a rose you ever saw. It came in yesterday's post, and is the first thing I laid eyes on this morning as I awoke. As Mr. Bachelier remarked to me, - "No matter what happens in this life, if one can glance up and with a glance embrace the sight of a rose". - I know precisely what he means. May I say Thank You.

The enclosed letter from Harnett speaks for itself. There is only one thing I don't understand about it. If he thinks there is a possibility of getting anywhere with old Guggenheim, why in the world hasn't he taken a crack at it. After all, by his own declaration, he merely salted away his Rosenwald double hand out. "hat with having a job at the time and enjoying the income of his Louisiana Hayride, the two Rosenwald awards were just so much gravey, and since, by his equally personal declaration that the only thing he wants in life is one million dollars, then it seems odd indeed that he should be recommending Guggenheim to me while not doing something about it for himself.

And while on the subject of awards, I shall again remark how flim-flam-ish I think a lot of the publishing house awards are, - and as a case in point, I cite the recent so-called contest wherein Ben Lucien Burman received a hand out. Certainly if prizes are going to be awarded to people already enjoying large publication, then the contests should be based on applications from well established writers and not those who are struggling to burst into print. The same case may be cited for that Carter person who wrote the Lower Mississippi, - lately the recipient of some kind of an award. I reckon the Saturday Review of Literature had been get a letter on this point. Since their life blood is advertisement from publishers they might not take kindly to publishing it

I must break off here to skip to town.But thaks a million for the rose which I shall carry with me in my heart.

1175

May 9th, approaching midnight.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

This is a curious time to file a report, but my mind is active, - filled with lots of things of varying interest, and so I think I shall level out my gray cells by chatting with one who understands.

I went to town this morning, - as indicated in my letter of earlier today. The lawyer, however, was still in conference with relief cases, so that we not even saw him. The Arenbourg is on the way, and things will be on the dotted line before long.

On my return, I found a perfectly swell letter awaiting me. Now that it is read and consigned to ashes in its physical state, it glows more brightly than ever, and makes such a pleasant back-drop to the lovely reproduction of the rose, sitting here before me on my desk.

Thanks to you, and to God, it was a swell day.

I liked what you had to say about old Rosenwald, - James did not get anything different from what I got, - and possibly the personal contact may turn a trick or two. It is about time to have a line from la belle Haygood, outlining her plans for her Louisiana visit. We shall see.

Your reaction to the magnolia grandiflora sounded so much like an echo of my own hopes that it all but knocked me down. Arenbourg shall have its magnolias regardless. Your enthusiasm on that point gives added value to the prospect in my own mind. Of course we shall not think of planting them until after Arenbourg is taken over, - some months hence, but isn't it grand to contemplate them, even from this time distance?

Yes, the gardenias and magnolias make May a marvelous month in Louisiana. For quite some time I have experimented with gardenias, so that there is now quite a collection of different ones growing in the neighborhood of what was once my sunken garden. I like the old fashioned ones best, - rather medium sized blossom, with wide green leaves, - the flower itself rather nestling flat, and almost seeming to exude, - a delicious white spot, upon the lush verdure of the branch. There are a couple of varieties which are characterized by their thin, narrow leaves, the bushes, not so fat and squatty as the old fashioned ones, but rather tall and a little gaunt. The blossoms incline to bend down from the stem, and the arrangement of the petals, - I guess petals, is more delicate and complicated, richer in design, equally fragrant in perfume, but not so well designed for bouquets, since they always hand their heads.

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Several of these are a good size for transplanting, and they will be transplanted to Arenbourg when it is ours, and a fence will ward off the loitering cows. The narrow leaves of the tall variety usually bedeck themselves with blossoms a little ahead of the old fashioned type. Long about the first of May they begin to bloom, and if the season is fair, and one gives an eye to various positions, controlling different intensities of sunlight and shadow, - thanks to their planting, they ought to blossom through until about the 20th of ~~May~~ June. It is obvious I am tired, since I seem to be mis-writing words so constantly.

And now for the gossip department. Ever so long ago, a certain Col. Lawrence, seeing one of Mrs. Moore's articles in a paper, wrote to thank her for the pleasure the article had afforded. Later he found himself in Natchez on Miss. River Commission business, and called to thank her personally. He liked things she did. He admired her. He had a wife who occasionally was in one sanitarium or another, because of a mental twist. He had one son and two daughters. He came here to "elrose" one evening and called. It was when the Army was deployed in this area. I think he was jealous of me, - imagine. Later I met him one night in Natchez. Mrs. Moore was giving a little party for Dr. Miller. He arrived from out of nowhere, quite unexpectedly.

Being as things are, and knowing of the platonic friendship between the Col. and Adam Moore, and the impossibility of the wife's mental condition, I was struck by a clipping sent me from Natchez by a mutual friend of la Moore and the Colonel's, saying in the clipping, - from a Baton Rouge paper, that the wife of Col. Lawrence had died, after having accidentally catching fire from trash she was burning in a barbecue pit in her back yard in that city.

Now, - at long last, the Colonel is free. I believe his two daughters are married. His son was captured in Tunisia in 1942, so at least he is grown up, leaving the Colonel free, I assume. And here comes the little Corporal's big opportunity. I should think. I can already envision the headlines: "Corp. Married Col. in Brilliant Military Match." - or some such. "Wouldn't it be grand if the poor bag could, at long last, find the companionship and independence of a home of her own, - after all these years."

Well, I apologize for making such a long tale of this episode, but knowing la Moore as you do, I thought I would pass the gossip along, for perhaps we shall have further news eventually regarding that way-faring personality.

Even though this letter is getting long-ish, and the typing progressively bad, if you don't mind, I shall ramble on a little longer.

...

1177

I would speak to you about D. D. T., - that remarkable solution being used as a spray for or against insects, following the flood. You probably are well acquainted with that item, and no doubt have read more about it than I have heard tell. But I'll report on what I think of it!

As you know, the formula was in the form of a German patent which had lain in the pigeonholes of the Patent Office in Washington, prior to the war. With the malaria problems adamant in the Pacific, the U. S. Government took over the patent and built several factories for the manufacture of this solution. It must be quite strong, - wherever the stuff is, since one quart of the powder is mixed with 13 quarts of water.

Up to the time of the flood, it had been used only by the military, but following the inundation, a little was released for this area. We gave a few casual squirts around a few places here, although where ever it was used, it was really supposed to have been applied to cover ever inch of space in any room selected. I got hold of some of the milky looking solution about five minutes before the unit doing the work was to depart from this region. I sprayed a couple of corners in my bedroom and my bath. It really has been surprisingly effective. Not a mosquito nor a fly has survived, and its effectiveness will retain its full potency for at least two months, with a possibility of lasting six months. It has no odor, and is harmless to everything save insects. On touching any surface that has been sprayed, however, the insect experiences a paralysis of all nerve centers, and accordingly drops in a faint and dies.

It is my understanding that shortly this D. D. T. business will be on the market for civilian use. I think it likely to be one of the great blessings to the South where everyone has always been subject to annoyance by insects, and where the poor have often been victims of malaria from childhood. Eventually, when it is easily obtainable, I reckon one may spray the outside of houses as well as the inside, - such as window and door openings, where insects are forever collecting ~~fast~~ while awaiting an opportunity to scoot inside when a screen door or window is opened. By merely touching anything at all that has been sprayed, the insect will drop dead, and millions of people within the several houses using the stuff will sleep in security and peace.

And speaking of other local doings, did I tell you that the saloon, appearing in the snap shot of the view from the terrace of Arenbourg is no more. On Saturday afternoon about 4 o'clock the place just naturally caught fire and went up in smoke. Now that Natchitoches Parish is dry, I know not if the saloon will be re-built or not. But perhaps Natchitoches Parish will not remain dry long, and if that be the case, then the "poor man's club" will rise again.

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Well, if I haven't already given a fine demonstration of a first class klotch-bosse by this time, then there is no point in going further. I appreciate your patience, and promise not to wear you down with another such endless communication right away.

But I did want to tell you on this particular day how happy you have made it for me, - for the report and for the lovely print, and for a thousand dreams of Arenbourg for the morrow.....

1179

May 11th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To hand a nice letter from Norman, which I enclose herewith.

In it is a detailed account of the Landry book, - and a very strong opinion of the same. We have the book and I disagree with the Madam, and agree with James, as to its value, or absence of same. It's greatest fault, - I think its inherent danger, is the statement relative to the superiority of one race, as opposed to another. As I take a quick glance toward Europe, I shudder at the wreck of humanity, brought about in part, by just such cock-eyed theories, and I shall always denounce them, regardless.

A letter from old Landry, addressed to "Dear Cousin Cammie", indicates the author may come by this way eventually. I shall be glad to chat with him and tell him how dangerous I think his theories are.

You were so characteristically thoughtful, in your last letter, as to mention Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler. I had not heard of his resignation, and I am glad to learn of it, for I like to keep up with such people. I have always greatly admired the man, and more often than not, - although not always, - have I subscribed to his ideas. His vision was always large, his thinking remarkably clear, and his courage of the first order. I recall so distinctly that it was he, the first of all Presidents of American colleges, who had the courage to denounce Prohibition, while politicians and public figures, during that benighted era when the hide-bound denominationalists were in control, - I have forgotten my subject, - but regardless, - it was N.M.B. who had the courage to stand up and state his opinions as to the evils of the whole shooting-match. After a flock of Republican politicians, including Presidents of the U. S. had pussy-footed the question, - you will recall Herbert Hoover, styled it "a noble experiment", it was men like N.M.B. and F.D.R. who pointed out the terrible evils the thing spawned, while lesser men said nothing or even paid it lip-service, as they stuffed graft from its operation into their own pockets.

As President of the Carnegie Peace Foundation, too, and as a Republican who had the courage to subscribe to the idea of a Wilsonian League of Nations, I also admired N.M.B. Another thing about him that always impressed me was the fact that although he was one of the most intellectual men in the country, his

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intellectualism didn't manifest itself in cloistered theories, but rather in strong statements of his position on affairs that were matters of moment to the humanities he addressed.

I think he is the only American, - perhaps the only citizen of the world who has addressed the English, French and German parlements in their own tongue, not so important intellectually, perhaps, but remarkable as a testimony to the regard in which he was held by the Governments of these several countries.

Well, - and at long last, - little Miss Alberta, - some 30 hours out from New Orleans, arrived at Melrose last night. I asked her about Old Man River. She replied laconically: "I am disgusted with him."

She said she telephoned him the day before she left town, but he was so drunk he couldn't talk straight. She told him he might telephone her the following day, in the morning, if he cared to send any message up here, or otherwise chat with her. He never called.

And so the stores fly, - Rosedown, New Iberia, New Orleans, and the old round of formation, reformation and deformation. All I know is that I hope he doesn't make a round here too soon. I must drop him a line about the burning of the saloon!

In my letter to Mr. Pipes, I have mentioned that I do not have the address of the Wilson company, but that you may have it. He may write accordingly. I realize, of course, that you appreciate the fact that he does not know I share his letters with you.

I also wrote him, suggesting that his name be used as co-discoverer of Clemence's artistic abilities, in the event Life should make use of her illustrations. Among the suggestion I made was that one or two different names be used in the text, - Miss Alberta's and Mr. Pipes, especially, for in the case of the latter, the mention of his name, and possibly Liba, might add to its sales. I wish I had known about the sending of the pictures at the time they went forward, - that was during the flood when communications were lapsing as between here and Norman, for I should have liked to be in on the data being forwarded. But the staff of Life will do the caption, assuming the pictures are used, and perhaps they will employ a lot of the particulars I had in mind. If I could round up Caroline Ramsey, a representative of Life and whoever is handling the Clemence things, it might be possible to do a big number on Melrose generally, - the typical remaining ante bellum plantation, the country of the Children of Strangers, the renaissance of bayou art, etc., etc., - but enough of all this for now. I have a perfectly swell reproduction of a rose sitting right here in front of me....

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May 12th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

If you are pressed for time, don't bother to read this memorandum, for it contains nothing but some speculation on history, and if you toss it into the basket at this point, you will have lost nothing.

Today, - or rather yesterday, arrived some pamphlets from one Landry, including, aside from the brochures, a fine looking book called The History of the Boston Club, with many illustrations and exhaustive particulars regarding the Canal Street institution, which in the 1840's was built by Dr. Mercer as his town house.

I asked to have some of the particulars regarding that gentleman read to me, and I was struck by the same error that so many historians of the South make. It stated flatly that Dr. Mercer "was not a Southern sympathizer".

Everyone of standing, save few exceptions, in the ante bellum South was opposed to secession, such people as Isaac Erwin, B. L. C. Wailles, David Hunt and so on. I have a Natchez newspaper, published just before the outbreak of hostilities in 1861, wherein are four columns of names of prominent citizens of Adams County, who go on record as opposing the suggestion that the South withdraw from the Union. They were styled "Unionists", and their point was that the South should insist upon its rights and struggle for them, always within the Union, but not by fighting for those rights after having withdrawn from the Union, - the latter position being one which they firmly maintained up until the outbreak of the War.

I guess it must be that historians, as they contemplated later events, have grown to consider the words "Unionist", "Federalist" and "Yankee" as being all one and the same thing, so that if, prior to 1861, a man was styled a Unionist, he must of necessity, always and forever after throughout the Civil War be considered sympathetic to the North, and therefore not a Southern sympathizer, - which is just as far from the truth as it could possibly be.

Dr. Mercer, for example, after doing all he could to keep his section within the Union, accepted the decision of the majority, when it was finally made, and gave himself and his treasure to the struggle which, like so many others, he felt was a Lost Cause.

When the Yankees took over New Orleans, Dr. Mercer was the President of several banks. Being a Southern sympathizer, he OKayed the suggestion that all the gold reserves be removed from the

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grasp of the enemy. He was accordingly hauled before old "Siverspohn" Butler, the Commander, and roundly denounced, his property confiscated, and his home appropriated by the Navy for its New Orleans headquarters.

Under these circumstances, - and there were others, such as he legacy to Robert M. Lee, "although not personally known to me", which indicate Dr. Mercer's concern for his region and its people.

Isn't it odd that under these circumstances, historians keep on saying that this man or that man, during the Civil War, was not a Southern sympathizer, whereas or rather, merely because such a man, prior to the dye being cast, had recommended that the issues at stake be settled by peaceful means within the Union rather than by bellicose methods outside the Union.

Well, that's the situation and old Landry's cock-eyed reading of history, and I am done with the whole business for this sitting at least.

Thanks to the magic of Nature, where boats were sailing across cotton fields a few weeks ago, tractors are now dromming, and endless rows of the famous old staple are an inch or two high. Yesterday it drizzled, and in consequence of the hoes being laid aside, I had quite a few visitors. One old darkie, - Archilius, wanted to speak of religion. I like to listen to him, now only for his philosophy, but equally so for his originality of phraseology. Take this one, for example: - "Back in the old times, ever so long ago, at the time when Christ was birthed....." Transposed into a musical concept, I often feel that the slow drawl and sparkling creation of verbs out of nouns give a quality to their conversation that is not unlike the symphony as opposed to the usual jitter-bug rendition of contemporary speech. Sometimes there is an hilarious twist to the expression, even on most profound subjects, and it requires an infinite amount of self control to restrain a smile, and something of a strain on the imagination to guess what word or thought is intended. But never do I smile at such times, and never do I ask them to repeat, for the greatest assurance of sympathetic confidence for the negro is his belief that the individual to whom he speaks somehow understands and doesn't accept his words in contrast to the usual language of white folks.

I recall a little while back, when one of my young friends came to see me, and was obviously bubbling over with enthusiasm about something or other. I was curious but let him volunteer. Finally, he told all: - "Something wonderful happened about an hour ago at hour house. The old sow found six little pigs". "Found" is the way the negro in these parts speaks of birth, and to the little darkies, it was wonderful, the mystery of birth of so many little porkers to round out the family larder and pocketbook, - and naturally I was seemingly as delighted with this wonderful news as was he.

Forgive a dumb letter. I shall do better at the next sitting....

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May 14th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

May I tell you that Arenbourg is ours.

The papers have been signed, and to give them an extra legal twist, they will be recorded today.

In today's outgoing mail, I must send a "bread and butter" note to General Stephen, Captain Joe and Lieutenant Dan, relative to the matter. I have already spoken my piece to J. A. and Payne. Nothing, thus far, as I have been breathed of the matter to any of the ladies connected with the family.

interruption. Gradually reference will be made to the matter, and it will slide into their consciousness without any particular notice.

The cotton is up, and it will continue to grow throughout the ensuing summer, and then with autumn, Peter and his family will move, and planting will begin and Arenbourg will take on form.

We had a quiet week end here, - a couple members of the family to Sunday dinner, plus Miss Alberta, and that was about all. In the late afternoon, we sat for a while on the upper gallery of the big house, and somehow conversation got around to Andrew Jackson. Someone told a story, used by Jackson's enemies during his Presidential campaigns to illustrate his lack of formal education. It is brief:

Said Andrew Jackson: "And if hoss don't spell horse, what do she spell?"

I had in mind to get down to see Clemence yesterday, and observe what progress she is making on her flower prints, painted on black paper. But the big old road machine which has been at labor on the spillway, somehow contrived to get bogged down at the point where the recent floods tore the place to pieces, and by the time they had extricated the lumbering old outfit, the roadway was again torn up, and water flowing through the former channel, so that it was impossible to make a fording....

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Up the road beyond Arenbourg, perhaps a half mile, Sammy Balthazar runs a grocery store, a place where cold drinks are sold, and where a gramophone supplies music for dancing. A somewhat rustic baseball field offers employment for the negroes hard by, and a tent houses a movie show on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.

Last night, there was a big old wind storm, accompanied by much lightening, at about the time the movie was going good. Some of my friends, passing by early this morning, tell me that the excitement ran high when the tent began flapping unmercifully, the rain coming down to the accompaniment of much thunder, while in the midst of things all the electric current went off. There were perhaps three or four hundred people present, and they tell me the scurrying that went on, up and down the road, was fearful and wonderful to behold. I certainly wish I might have been there for the stampede must have been grand.

interruption

But getting back to Arenbourg, the papers signed indicate that the parcel includes something over two acres, as I understood the document as it was read. The phraseology was altered in one place, at my request, to cover a circumstance which you will note when a copy of the business becomes available and it is forwarded for your inspection. Of course these two acres, - as an extent of land goes, is not the important thing, as I assume we both view it. It is the start of things, to which other attributes may be added as time and circumstance permit. B. L. C. Wailes would apply the word "neat" to this half acres of "heaven", and as time marches on, it may remain a hermitage without-out-lying appurtenances or it may serve as a residence from which an additional few acres may be added, for the accommodation of a couple of cows, some chickens and hogs, some corn and some cotton, to please some family or other who would like to serve themselves and us. Slap across the river is "eline's 40 acres, and eventually some such place might be acquired to supplement the domestic needs of Arenbourg itself. But that is for the future, and may be taken into consideration at that time. Sufficient unto the present is the knowledge that Arenbourg is "to hand", and as a focal point, we may move in whatever direction appears to be best.

Along side my rose, a big silver jar of gardenias spread their heavenly perfume about my desk all day yesterday. The flowers were not so much for my own delectation as for their symbolic memory of one or another person, and not the least for those persons who remained for a little while with those I love and then departed before a certain section of the world went awry.....

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May 15th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It was grand to have your reports in this morning's mail, but I am distressed that your recuperation has been so laggardly. Sunshine and warmth is what you need, and we have such an abundance of it in these parts. If only we might somehow arrange to get you to some of it, which would be so much grander than sending any to you. Perhaps the new physician may have better success than the former, and I certainly hope the weather man will lend a hand.

When things are at such a pitch, what with the dint of painters thrown in for good measure, - and what a mess that always makes, but more especially in a New York apartment, but please don't try to undertake correspondence at such times. Every second of relaxation is so precious that it is ever so much better to conserve those brief moments for your own strength, and you know I will always understand. I am enclosing two rather amusing letters from Mr. Pipes, - which I thought you would enjoy. Isn't it nice that life is so nibbling?

I have told Mr. Pipes of Arenbourg possibilities, with a view to eventual occupation of one of the cabins there, although I see no prospect of us establishing any contact before another year or so. I am glad he is comfortably housed where he is at present, and I only regret that time being lost until we can resume some of the work on which we have planned. But we shall continue along lines that eventually lead to the completing of one or two of the manuscripts that are still in their unfinished state, and sooner or later, we shall be able to get the others all ship-shape.

I am indebted to you for advising me in regard to the Sevigne letters. The matter of the bonds became known to me in advance of the receipt of your letter, - there will be ten, I believe, of the 18.75 variety, which will be worth while preserving until maturity, I suppose, although I shall throw them into the Arenbourg development, should circumstances warrant. I appreciated the direct quote, for it gave me an opportunity to judge the situation as regards the Arenbourg transaction, - and to make reference to the matter without actually mentioning it, - so as to bridge the matter over.

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I thought it would be very remarkable if that transaction could be effected if no leaks developed. Payne always tells everything he knows, and as his signature was required, I felt some miracle had transpired if he had not mentioned it. Thanks to your letter, however, I sensed that he had probably spilled the beans, and accordingly, quite casually, I referred to superstitions that remain inherent, regardless of people's belief that they could divest themselves of them. I went on to say that for myself, I always seemed to catch myself knocking wood, or refraining from mentioning anything which I wanted very much, - refraining from mentioning it before it was an accomplished fact. We passed along that line, and I thought I detected a certain smoothness of spirit which had been lacking for some days. Thanks to your information of this point, everything may now rock along quite serenely on this particular subject without any further reference to it, and with a tacit understanding that the avoidance of it is merely based on superstition. Thank you much.

It is a pity that little Waldi had to come down sick at just the time his mistress was a little under the weather, - or rather subject to the vagaries of the weather, since open air seems to be a prime necessity for our animal friends. That curious affliction which this particular type of dog is subject to is pitiful, I think. I recall that one of the dogs here at one time was so put under the weather for a time, and I did feel sorry for it, every time I ganced in that direction. It is wonderful how the chords, so thoroughly paralyzed at such times, seem to come back into normal functioning powers again, - only I wish, should Waldi have to undergo such set-backs, could arrange it when you were more in the pink of condition.

Dr. Gray of L. S. U. or rather the State Depat. of Agriculture is here and is now waiting for me to look over the various types of gardenias which are now thriving their mightiest. He will no doubt recommend some spray for them, as they seem to carry some fungus growth on their leaves, which they tell me isn't pretty, but I can't see it well enough to detect it readily. The blossoms are always as elegant as though the fungus were not present, and as near as I can make out almost all gardenias carry the growth on the leaves for half a century at a time, and survive. But if I can rid them of it, I shall do so, and Dr. Gray is just the man to tell me about it. And so I shall skip for this sitting. I shall be thinking of you so often and hoping that the medical and atmospheric departments may both give the kind of aid we would so much like to have from them. Do go slow and don't try to write until you are ever so much better. You know I shall always understand.....

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Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Your Winter weather seems to have wandered off in this direction. If, in its place, some of our summer heat has taken its place, I shall be delighted, but I'm afraid the cold wave is general. From temperatures in the 90's, we dropped to the 50's. Open fires are going full blast on the hearth, as sounds of tractors in the cotton field float in from beyond the White Garden. It doesn't make any sense, since cotton can't stand cold, but so is the situation in this curious month of May.

Yesterday was one of those lovely gray days, - the sky overcast, and seemingly like November. After dinner I took a brisk walk along Cane River, from the bridge to Arenbourg, looking delicious because I was able to eliminate the pigs and the cows, browsing on the tapis vert, and conceive it as it will appear a little later when we get things straightened around a bit.

The postman brought but a single letter, - from Miss Maude Stanton to the Madam. Miss Maude must be about 83 or 84 now, but seems to be taking things in her stride. She spoke of the turkeys she is raising and how nice some of her flowers look. I can say from personal observation in times gone by that the Windy Hill turkeys under Miss Maude's care usually appear to better advantage than her flowers. She says she plans making a list of all the Natchez Statons, giving the dates of their births and deaths, to be cut in the monument now on the family grave plot in the City Cemetery, - the job to be done after she is dead. I am hoping she may get the data together and that the dates will be inscribed on the monument. Up to now, the reading on the marble shaft makes no sense at all, for there appears only the names of the people, with nothing to indicate their identity. It was a Stanton custom to name their offspring after each other, and what with these names listed one after another, the thing comes to read like this: "William, Frederick, David, Frederick, William, David, Frederick, William, David, David, Frederick William and so on endlessly.

Only in Natchez would they do anything so cockeyed, and yet there are the names on the monument, and they don't mean a thing. If once the dates could be inscribed on the shaft, opposite each individual, it would really represent quite a table of vital statistics, and a geneologists' delight. Otherwise of course it is merely a curiosity.

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After amiling my last report, it ocured to me that I didn't write the Jackson story correctly. Instead of writing the word "hoss", I should have spelled it h - o - double s", and that might have made the thing comprehensible. I apologize for having put the thing down in such as fashion as to make no sense, I presume.

Did I mention having a note from Mrs. Moore's daughter, who was married in "atchitoches on Mother's Day, - May 9th, - a couple of years back. She wrote from "atchez, although she is living in Baton Rouge, and amon other things spoke of her anticipation of a visit from old man Stork in September, and also that she thought her mother would be glad to get out of the Army. I can imagine the latter readily enough. I do hope she may eventually marry Colonel Lawrence.

It seems reather curious to me that we haven't heard from la belle Ramsey, but possibly high water caught her some place, and she is having to paddle herself out. As I recall, she was planning to make it here about this time in May, - at least, that is the way I recall it, although little Miss Dormon was here at the time, and it is so etimes necessary to re-arrange one's added mind, when the wild flowers get to spilling over the other gems of coversation, and accordingly it is possible that I am a little bit off the track, so far as Miss Ramsey's plans go.

Now would be an excellent time for some color films to be made in these parts, before all the post-flood effects have been washed away. Then, too, Lemence appears to be in unusually fine vigor these days, and I somehow think her appearance on film right at this particular season might give an especial verve to the photos.

I shall write Essae Mae this morning and see if she knows anything more than she did, and possibly we shall be able to entice the Ramsey number here a little sooner. According to Miss Alberta, Frances Benjamin Johnson is planning to come here almost any day, although we have yet to have the first line from the old girl, - in her 80's, - whom, they say, is a wizard with a camera and a witch with the whiskey bottle. So be, - what we want is bigger and better fine photographs, and we can stand la Johnson for such an end, whiskey and all.

I do hope tis finds you feeling lots better and that your new phisician may be accomplishing a lot of things the other failed to do. I do so wish it were possible for you just to fly down this way and drink in some warmth, - which we shall have back again in a day or so, - and some of the sunshine of which there is gobs this morning. In the mean time, please go slow.....

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May 18th, 1945.
Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To hand your nice report in yesterday's post, and I am delighted to learn that the painters have come and gone. I'll bet Waldi is dqually so. The mental picture, rising in my mind, of a daschund fixed up like a zebra was hilarious. I reckon it wasn't so funny trying o get him back to normalcy, however.

You mentioned the possibility that you had spilled beans in reference to Mme. Vigee-Lebrun. I don't believe so, - at least I can't think how that can be so. In one of my recent notes to Mr. Pipes, I referred to Clemence as our colored Cane River prototype of Mme. Vigee-Lebrun, - what with each of those two ladies being handy with the brush, and in his response he inquired as to the identity of the original Mme. Vigee-Lebrun, whose acquaintance he had not made. That was all, so far as I can recollect, so I can't think any beans were spilled on that score, - unless I have missed some point along the way.

To hand in yesterday's mail also came the copy of Liberty with Mary Rhodes' story therein. May I say thank you much much. As yet I haven't had an opportunity to explore its contents, but am hoping to be able to this week end. Also I was enchanted to have Dame Eleanor's column relative to the messages received on "V" Day. I like to keep up with Hyde Park doings. I gather that place will be turned over to the nation without waiting for years to pass by, - a provision made possible, I believe, by the terms of the President's will. Wouldn't it be pleasant to make a little pilgrimage with a congenial soul, when the place is open, - the trip up the Hudson is to pleasant on a pretty day, and to saunter about the home where so noble a person has lived so recently, - it would certainly be a grand experience.

The all time low for May 17th temperatures in this area is easing off this morning. There is a bright sun, and the prognosticators say that we shall have really warm weather by afternoon. This will make the younger set happy along the river, for tonight at the Rosenwald School of St. Mathew's, the young blades are having a dance, - the Prom, they call it, and most of them have procured summer-ish clothes in anticipation of the frolic. What with clear skies and a waxing moon, I know the party will be a great success. It always astonishes me to note the metamorphosis that transpires whenever a party such as this occurs. If you see the children in the late afternoon, they appear to be about their actual ages, - say 13 to 15 or 16. Perhaps they are playing marbles, hoping (hopping) rides on the tractors, climbing trees or doing any of the million things children do at that age.

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But let the sun go down, and school open its doors for an entertainment, and lo! - the children of sunset are somehow transposed into grown ups of first dark. Each in his long trousers or party dresses, (singular would perhaps be better), - and one has the impression of being with people of maturity. I have never noticed this phenomenon with white children, who somehow remain children even after the sun has gone below the horizon. But with these children the transformation never fails, and - am glad that tonight will see them for an evening actually be grown-ups, for so genuine is the change that they do not seem at all to be playing a part.

Little Miss Alberta continues to toge off her magnolias, and secretly, - so it is supposed to be, - she is doing a portrait of the Madam. I think Miss Alberta cannot paint portraits, but possibly she will exceed her art in this instance and turn out something good, in the human being department.

I wasn't supposed to know anything about it until she mentioned the sittings the other day, - and right in front of the Madam. I laid hold of the opportunity instantly, saying to the Madam:

"Isn't it remarkable that neither you nor I, - in plaining secretes with either Miss Alberta or with Paynie, can hope to hold anything for a surprise for each other?"

This so neatly covered the quiet regarding Arenbourg, - which I continue to maintain, that that whole matter appears to be very successfully bridged, and the matter of both portrait and property is never mentioned by either of us to the other, - each apparently respecting a secret, which is no secret at all, save that we play the game as though it were, - and thanks to the parallel, the one secret seems as natural as the other. It is certainly nice to have been provided with such a timely hurdle.

Must skip. Please go slow.....

Blennerhasset

1191

May 20th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It's the hour of charm, - this Sunday night, so far as the radio goes, but I am going to like that hour better by not listening to the radio but, instead, by talking a little before folding up my beard and calling it a day.

In Saturday's post came a report which was good for the heart. Somehow I felt things were easing a little, what with the decorators gone, the weather fair and communications from hither and yon flowing along so-so. Last night about this hour, my very busy assistant rushed in, - having been employed all day at school in preparation for a dance being held there for the young ladies and gentlemen of St. Mathew's School. I glanced over the correspondence, read and burned one report, and then raced through Mr. Pipes communications which I enclose herewith.

I noticed in your report, - still very clear in my mind these 24 hours after, that your reference to Mme. Vigee-Lebrun must be based, - the bean spilling department, - to a temporary mixing of identity of two characters, - both prominent in the Arts, - Mme. Vigee-Lebrun and Mme. de Sevigne. Somehow, from the content of this report, I am lead to (led to) believe that you really had transposed the identity of the one to the other, momentarily, - which led to my inquiry regarding that point. If this be true, as might readily happen, then all is clear once more. And if that isn't the case, it is alright anyway, since I am not conscious of any of those vegetables having been spilled.

This evening, - for the first time in a long - I guess over a year, - we read something aloud, - the Madam to me. It was the Blennerhasset article by Mrs. Blennerhasset Adams, in the 1901 Century. I was glad to see the reproduction of the miniature, too.

Although the magazine was originally addressed to the Madam, I am going to try to borrow it, for I should like to refer to it eventually when a parfait secretaire joins me in eventual explorations along similar lines, and in regards to old Blennerhasset himself.

It has been so long since I went over the B. L. C. Wailes Diary that I don't recall all the details about the Blennerhassets, but I do think he mentions the widow of the son, then (1858 or 1859) in poverty in Missouri. I think he also referred to Mr. Blennerhasset

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who was the subject of the Century article, as Lewis Carr.

In McCardle and Somebody's two volume Hist. of Miss., there is an extensive account of Blennerhasset, saying his name was really Lewis Carr, that after marrying his niece and going to India where his brother was stationed, he came to this hemisphere, practiced law of dubious intregreity, - it seems to me there was something about his defense of smugglers, or some such, - and that was prior to the Lafitte operations in the same neighborhood, - and his subsequent arrival in New Orleans where he took up the name of Blennerhasset, - well supplied with funds from somewhat ill-gotten practices, - blackmail, as I recall, or some such, - in Jamaica.

Now tis doesn't sound much like Mrs. B. Adams' account, does it. I do think that much more might have been said about Mr. B., to keep the picture straight. If there was a villian, - and there was one, at least, in the Burr business, it was probably neither Burr nor Blennerhasset, but old Wilkerson, General of the U. S. Army, whose income was enlarged by the pay of Spain, while holding the U. S. post, - as subsequent vouchers have demonstrated.

But of this Adams account, I notice there isn't much reference to the life of Blennerhasset in Mississippi. Some day I want to look over the records in Fort Gibson, where his elegant country seat was situated, - some 6 miles away. I have seen a partial transcript of the court records there from 1807 through 1811, and I must say one is struck by the frequency of appearance of Blennerhasset's name, - suing and being sued, - for assault and battery and the like, - none of which sounds too rosey.

I need not say more along this line, for it can't be of great interest to start with, and besides, I think I must, by all this recitation, demonstrated how much stiumation I have received in reading the Century article which a most excellent person has provided.

Of the enclosures, they speak for themselves, and I only regret that I am not able to make a transcript at the moment of my response, covering some of the main items.

Regarding Uncle Ike, - Isaac Erwin's Diary, I am pointing out that he has already rendered the Oklahoma Press a distinct service by calling their attention to, - by acquainting them with, the existence of this Diary, and that I have played my part in making a like gesture by effecting its transmission for consideration. I shall be so bold as to inquire if provision is made, in the anticipated cost of bringing out the work, - cost figured by the University Press, for expenses of annotating, etc., - quite aside from actual printing costs, - paper, ink, binding, etc. My point is that if he and I are to do it, - and I doubt if Oklahoma could find anyone else with the particulars required, there should be some concrete expression of good will on the part of the O. Press, balancing our gestures, already made, - they should either publish something for us forthwith, or make some sort of a financial grant. I shall be interested in what he responds. I have already expressed myself as being willing to

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accept whatever recompense he thinks is in order, - either in a financial payment, or in a promise to publish something of our own composition, - since obviously such a big work as Uncle Ike's will never pay for its first printing, the demand will be so small.

In the matter of the Prince of Jallon, I am quite willing to go along on that proposition, since I must work with someone on it. I have suggested that a volume, not unlike G. B. Shaw's Saint Joan might be the proper medium, - the first two-thirds for an introduction, the final third for something or other in blank verse, - the latter more or less disregarding the actualities, as covered by the data included in the introduction. I am in no certain frame of mind as to how that story could best be treated from a money making point of view. For a long time I had thought of the novel as a medium, and yet without assistance, that is impossible. At the same time, I have thought that a serious study of a couple of hundred pages, with a somewhat romantic touch introduced into the blank verser section might enjoy some popularity, - or at least some appeal to those who do things for the theatre or the movies ~~in~~ with material of this nature.

Well, we shall see what the response to these two points may be. I mention these facts, however, so that when subsequent correspondence comes to hand and is passed along, you may be quite up to the moment on the points so covered.

Little Miss Alberta, finding herself in much the situation la Moore did a couple of years back, while a guest here, plans to leave this coming week. Too much fussing on the part of the hostess.

J. A. consulted me today, asking what I thought about the general health situation. I stated frankly that while strength improved, as was obvious, the mental fatigue was obvious and that a few weeks in the mountains of North Carolina was my idea of what was best, - although I thought he would have some uphill business trying to bundle up his patient and hence beyond the front gate.

Things will careen along all summer, just about as they are, I suppose, while the actual change in the patient will be so gradual that few if anyone save me will notice it. And then, with the coming of "inter, we shall go through what we went through last year and the year before, with the pendulum always swinging back and forth, but never quite so far as the season that preceeded each set back.

Without actually referring to Arenbourg, there appears to be a tacit understanding of its existence, as between her and me. There was a reference to an old 4 poster Cane River bed today, - a wish expressed that I should have it. As there are already two such items in this house, it is obviously with Arenbourg in mind that the offer was made. I shall be delighted to accept, even though it is without springs or mattress and needs must be finished, - or rather re-finished.

8011

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Alors, I have written too much, and I apologize for
taking up so much of your precious time, but the night, and especia
lly nights with a glorious moon, pass by so quickly.

One more admonition, - please go slow, and goodnight...

1195

May 22nd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

There is no value whatsoever to this report. I have
but a few moments before post time, but I did want to say good
morning.

Your friend, little Miss Alberta, reported herself as having
a swimming in the head yesterday afternoon. For supper all she
wanted was some prune juice. She asked the "adam wahs she would
do in such a case. The Madam said she would take some epsom
salts. Little Miss A. threw up her hands in ~~xx~~ horror. Prune
juice is one thing, but Mary Baker Eddy and epsom salts are two
other things.

And so, accordingly, little Miss A. took her prune juince, and
then asked me to wire her New Orleans practitioner the following
message:

"I NEED ASSISTANCE".

No sooner had the message been telephoned to Western Union,
than Miss A. with drew, emerging later, to announce that she
felt greatly relieved.

She further explained that while she realized the salts might
have been more speedy, - I assume she meant more speedy than the
prune juice and "ary Baker Eddy, still she wanted to prove that
faith could move mountains, - so to speak.

Anything she does is alright, so to speak, but why anybody
should want to prove anything in that direction when the demands
upon the Powers That Be seem to be so wide-spread and so multitudinous.
All, - all in all, - I must say that little Miss A. is a great
big riot, and that when she leaves here on Thursday, I shall miss
her on several counts, - not the least of which will be her desire to
prove something or other.

And that is all for the moment. Do go slow, and if you can't
go slow, go as slowly as you can.....

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May 22nd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

This is my second report under this date line. My first went forward this morning. I write you this second just afternoon.

To hand came three letters, - what a shower of blessings.

Two were safely in my pocket when the other, addressed to us jointly was read. It was perfect, and the vague reference to things as they are could not have been better x arranged by old Mr. Talleyrand himself.

Did I understand you to say reference had been made by "mesdames", or merely by "adam". In any event I have not mentioned the matter to either, and I shall let things jog along just as they are, since the crop will not evacuate Arenbourg until this autumn, and in the mean time the thing will just grow naturally, and all will be well.

The Madam was quite pleased with your letter and all the points you covered. In the same mail came a letter from Captain Joe Henry, in which he made some reference to me. It was the "adam's" intention to send that along to you, and his obvious reference to Arenbourg confirms my understanding that the matter is well known, although I do not have any idea if la Grignan has been acquainted with the fact. There is some rumour that Sister and her family may move to Hammond, La., before long. If this should turn out to be a fact, it would be just dandy, as Hammond is only about 60 miles from New Orleans, and hence quite removed from this area.

After dinner, I caught up with my secretary and we ran through several items of work, and your reports of the 17th and 18th. May I say thanks a million. It was characteristically thoughtful of you to think of me in regard to the records, and if luck is with me I shall have my own machine to play them on regardless, although, should it be in any way delayed, I can readily go to Sammy's and make use of his, although I should much prefer to share them with no one but myself and the telepathetic companion who never seems to be too far away.

And thanks, too, for sending me the clipping as to Herrenchimsee. What a blessing that has been spared! Now if Newschwainstein, - Heaven forgive the spelling, - and Linderhof, then there will be so much to be thankful for in the wake of all the other things destroyed of which we should prefer not to contemplate.

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A letter to hand from Mr. Lottinville of Oklahoma Press to the Madam, saying that the readers had reported favorably on the Erwin volume they have just finished reading, and could additional material be sent. I have responded, advising him that the other volumes have been packed and forwarded by American Express. I also reported that one volume, as yet not transcribed, and a batch of family papers, plus some photographs and photostats, could go forward later. This keeps a wedge handy, and at the same time gives us some opportunity to have the photostating, etc., done. I know perfectly well that we shall never get around to transcribing the volume of the diary still in the original script, but that isn't important, for it can be transcribed by Oklahoma, - if things get to that point.

In the mean time I shall be interested in learning what Mr. Pipe's re-action to my inquiries regarding some sort of a nod from the Press may be likely, so far as a return gesture of good will, covering some of our stuff goes.

Miss Alberta appears to be improved in health and is painting madly, for Wednesday will be here last day, as she departs for home on Thursday morning. I am still laughing in my beard at her wonderful dumbness in spilling the news about doing the portrait, for it afforded me such a wonderful opportunity to parallel the Arenbourg secret, and its spilling by Raynie.

Yesterday was good fishing weather in these parts, too, for it rained in the afternoon, and I took that opportunity to walk on the Bermuda Road, casting a casual glance at Arenbourg in the rain. I liked it, and as suggested in your report, it would certainly be nice to have a prolonged literary evening, wherein some plans could be gone over, just for the sheer pleasure of building a park with toys. Before too long I must draw one of my inimitable maps, and we shall discuss the difficulties and advantages together.

For the moment, - when the crop has been taken off and the thing comes to hand, the first thing to be done is to fence the place, and after that I think the present dwelling, - as in the background of the youth with the horse, should be pulled around, facing the south and looking down the tapis vert. This will set the temporary structure at about the spot where the gallery will be when la maison de la reine is constructed. While temporarily affording a dwelling place, it will also enable one to better arrange the lay out of everything, such as running in the new drive, planting the magnolias, etc., without the necessity of changing anything when circumstances permit the actual construction of the two separate units of the ultimate dwelling, - so that finally the present house may be taken down, - after the other has been built, and merely a connecting gallery for those two houses, run along the spot occupied by the temporary structure. So things turn, and there'll be much more talk as time goes on. Thanks for Herrenchheimsee and for Arenbourg, and the reason for being that plans for the morrow afford..... Of course "aldi and all will eventually have some fresh air and quiet.....

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May 24th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

From the enclosure, you will note that Mr. Pipes appears well pleased with the latest package received from Melrose.

It is grand when enthusiasm brings him to write a whole letter in the form of an Art Review. The picture, depicting the burning of the house, must have been inspired by the destruction of the saloon, I suppose.

The latest news on that event is that the saloon will be rebuilt. I am glad to hear that because, as you will recall from the photograph, the lights from that building will shine pleasantly along the surface of the water, when viewed from Arenbourg on the opposite shore.

Little Miss A. leaves today, well fortified with magnolia pictures which she has painted in abundance. In a way I am sorry that she must also take with her a somewhat drab memory of a personality which, up until now, was more or less brilliant.

Yesterday's post was rather thin, with but a single letter to hand, and that for the Madam. It was from Clif Tyrd of Shreveport, threatening to get down this way before long. I always look forward with anticipation to visitors, - they tend to fill in so many otherwise uncertain gaps.

Harmonson? Did I mention that little Miss A. wants to speak to Mr. Armonson, - or some such name, - of New Orleans about the Louisiana Scrapbook. She says Mr. Armonson is a great enthusiast of books on Louisiana, and that he is the publisher of the Stanley Arthur books, - "Audubon" and "Birds of Louisiana", I reckon. In the event other publishers fail, she thinks he might want to undertake the Scrapbook. She says he has a book shop on Royal Street which does a big business in tourist sales, and that he pumps his publications into other New Orleans book shops madly. Possibly she has something there, and it might eventually be worth a try. Yesterday, in looking over Pencil Points, - the publication sent by a friend some years back, I discovered just the type of Louisiana map I have been casting about for, to be included in the Scrapbook. I think a map is important for such a work, and this one is illustrated by a flock of typical Louisiana houses in little boxes around the edge. Another idea and aid, born afar but as always fruitful and filling one with gratitude.....

0031

1199

May 25th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Herrenchiemsee is still on my mind, and I must again say how much I enjoyed the clipping, and how good it is to know that it survived. The thought came to mind this morning at 5 when some news broadcast mentioned something about someone having lived in the neighborhood of Starenburgh, and that of course brought up thoughts of Ludwig, so that naturally Linderhof and all the rest started revolving in my thoughts.

And Linderhof suggests Arenbourg, and Arenbourg means --- and I have been thinking of how, eventually, we could block off uncle Dora's cabin from the end of the tapis vert, and now it occurs to me how that could be done ever so effectively.

With live oaks on the edge of the terrace, - to the right hand side looking south toward the bridge, and with magnolias on the left, balancing the live oaks, that would put Uncle Dora's cabin slap at the end of the promenade. It occurs to me, however, that something very nice would be to put a little building right at the end of the tapis vert, something like a little Greek temple, with two little pillars on either side of the entrance, and the little building itself to be used as anything from a tool house to a repository for newspapers, a storage place or a terminus for afternoon tea. Set off by the deep green of the grandiflora leaves, it would be a spot of white terminating the promenade, and at the same time, what with the magnolias separating the promenade from everything to the east, it would naturally throw the eye to the South east, along the surface of the river, easily in view through the somewhat lacy foliage of the live oaks. It's another of those things that is so much fun to figure out, and anything from the cheapest kind of material to marble would suit. I don't know if you recall how the Theatre at the Little Trianon was arranged, but I suppose that is from when came my idea. Here, down a rather narrow hedged walk, one seems abruptly at the end, two little columns with a pair of glass doors recessed just a little. That is all one sees, but once inside, one discovers that the building is really quite large. Well, there would be no point in a large building and no place for one at the end of Arenbourg's tapis vert, but a nice little spot of white would be delicious, what with all the green about, and the business behind the columns could be any old thing that seemed best suited at the time.

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There was a big old moon over Cane River last night. At first dark, after the tractors had all been put aside for the day, I met my friend, Jack, having just put his to bed, and he asked me to ride with him in his boat across the river, opposite "elrose to the South. I did so, and the crossing was elegant. We sat on his gallery for a while, and then later, after doing lots of canvassing of things for the morrow, - a lot of tomorrow's I walked back home, around by the bridge, and the air was delicious and heavy with magnolias, and a way up the river, as I cross the bridge, I could see where Arenbourg slept in the midnight moonlight. It was nice, nice in lots of ways and most of all because telepathetically the air was laden with thoughts of a better tomorrow when mangolias and moonlight and stars and fireflies could be the better enjoyed because they would be shared.....

1201

1201

May 25th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Tow reports to hand in the same post, and may I say thanks millions.

May I not say thanks for another report, coming from a different direction, - New Orleans, - what with Old Man River having telephoned yesterday, saying that on Wednesday, - May 30th, he would arrive with Frances Benjamin Johnson. I had hoped the latter's visit at least would be at such a time as to make it possible for me to take her in hand, particularly as regards "lemence, - but the best made plans of mice and men.

Well, that will be next week's problem, and sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

It was grand of you to acquaint me with the contents of communications headed for A. C. I was able to get a look at my report before she had ever seen her mail, and accordingly I was doubly assured. Up to the present I haven't heard a peep about your letter, - only that there were clippings to hand which she would eventually read. So be it, although we now speak of "secrets" jokingly, and so I guess everything is moving along smoothly in that direction. I assume la Grignan has not as yet been informed.

The enclosed communications also came to hand today. They speak for themselves. Apparently I didn't make myself too clear as to one point or another. It wasn't the question being raised as to names appearing on the "rwin book. It was merely a suggestion that pressure might be mildly applied to old Oklahoma to give a thought to some of our other manuscripts, already prepared for publication. In response, I have not even attempted to make myself clear on that point.

I was much interested in what was found regarding the Prince of Jallon, - traveling by coach and 4 is really rather more elegant than I had supposed to have been the case during his round of visits to the various Eastern states after leaving Natchez.

I would ask you to disregard his inquiry as to the possibility you might find something in local repositories regarding the Prince. You have already supplied me with all particulars necessary, including the photostats, etc., covering the case, and when the time is ripe, I shall take this material under advisement with him. I am rather anxious to get the thing whipped up into some kind of shape, and the way the present set-up looks, it might just as well be in collaboration with him, in order to get the pot boiling for Arenbourg.

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1202

I have also written him that when the "rwin business goes over, - and possibly before it is finished, it might not be a bad idea to drop a hint as to the Rev. Chase's Diary, as a distinct and noble successor to old "Uncle Ike".

Mr. Pipes has never seen that manuscript, but I shall be glad to work with him on it, - if and when, for it too should serve as a possibility in the establishment of firm foundations for Arenbourg.

His reference to the Phillips material in the Oklahoma University collection or where ever, suggests two points: - first that he will find material for another "Glory" book, similar to the one he is or has done on the Rosewald thing, and secondly, there should readily be an Oklahoma Scrapbook in that collection. Phillips was the millionaire who gave the library or some such, and the WPA stuff in that collection covers everything about Oklahoma, it is said. Mr. Pipes and I, in discussing the Louisiana and Mississippi Scrapbooks, have envisioned one for Oklahoma, and I have no doubt that while accumulating the material for the "Glory" book, the other will come readily to hand. I have written him on this point, and recalled to mind certain material in this house which was provided for filler for the "Glory" book which may no doubt be drawn upon for the same type of filler for the Oklahoma Glory book which he appears to be considering at the moment.

I am so glad you were able to get out with your little friend, and make a little tour of the Botanical Gardens. Surely a lot of fresh air and sunshine will help lots, although what is equally imperative is a lot of do-nothing, too, and I only wish that were possible before so very long. May the fair weather keep up and the do-nothing opportunity present itself before so very long. I shall keep my fingers crossed that it may come soon.

I am so glad you mentioned the girl friend's anniversary. I am glad the R.'s were there, too, for she especially would make a lovely addition to any group and her presence at such a festivity, and particularly under the somewhat trying circumstances of uncertainty, would be a distinct asset. I'm afraid my congratulations are a little belated, but do pass them along if they are not too late. On the matter of the prolonged absence, there is the point for keeping the faith, - at least nothing official has come through and it would have, had there been anything radically wrong to report. The enclosures are so fat, I had better content myself with this single page, - and yet there is so much I would share in thought.....

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1203

May 28th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To hand in Saturday post came the copies of Life, all of which I have turned through with the greatest of interest, regretting only that a parfait secretaire were not along side, in order that we might explore a whole lot of tings together, - for aside from the very obvious and interesting pictures, there are so many articles which I am sure would be worth reading, and even more would be worth discussing. I shall turn through them again and again, and eventually I shall put them on the "holding shelf" for eventual reference.

It was a good week-end, although with nothing especial to mark it as unique. Mr. Mazurette came up to Melrose from his Little River Farm, and although I saw him but for a few moments, that did me much good, as he is a person of good will, and the mere contact with such people, I find, does much for one, even though there be little opportunity to go into things at the moment. Somehow it puts me in mind of a line in an English Music Hall song, - a rather naughty one, - but one which expressed in one line, something which I have sometimes experienced in my association with one rare person or another. The line reads:

"One felt so sanctified just sitting by him", -

and how true is that statement of feeling, even though the occasion be so rare that it might almost be termed a miracle.

Mr. Byrd came down Saturday morning from Shreveport, and remained until Sunday evening. He and I took occasion to walk up the Bermuda Road a ways, and came back along the river, trans (interruption)

I was speaking of Mr. Byrd. Oh, yes, - we crossed the entire length of Arenbourg, and we glanced about casually, so as not to appear to interested, what with the Peter Matoyers being about. On our return, we glanced over the general photographs and plans of la maison de la reine, and Mr. Byrd was enchanted at the harmony of such a house for such a setting. He accordingly offered to draw up plans of the place, fitting in the house with the exigencies of the situation, and so during the forth coming

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week, he will undertake this work. It is my understanding that the plans will be rather large, and eventually they may have a very practical value. Mr. Byrd is the head of the equivalent of the Corner Shop of A. H. Macy, - only his organization is much smaller, of course. It is the Hemmingway Johnson Furniture Company of Shreveport, and he appears to know everything about everything from laying the foundation of a house to embroidering the last initial on the final guest towel. I appreciate his interest in the matter, and it will be nice to have the plans tucked away for consideration when we get the pump primed.

Rumor had it that when Red River spilled over into Cane, all of the astonishing numbers of fish, inhabiting the latter, were swept southward to the Mississippi and the sea, but a friend, who accompanied Mr. Byrd, spent Sunday afternoon, - or rather Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning fishing, and he returned each time with an enormous string of fish, reporting that he was tired out from dropping his line in the water and hauling out the catch. I reckon he had about a washtub full. Accordingly I assume all the fish didn't leave their native habitat. A mulatto, living up the road a little piece from Arenbourg, found a 3 or 4 foot alligator in his cotton patch, which he figured must have come into Cane River from Red. This curious creature he put in an old cistern, and proposes to raise them there, but I reckon the thing is about doomed in such an underground home.

The Madam was in bed long before sundown, following the usual noisy Sunday, and accordingly I took to the road for a turn. Among others, I met Mugabou, who is a nice darkie, and he said he wanted to talk about Arenbourg, and wanted ever so much to get his tractor on the terrace, smoothing it off and getting things to going. Again he admonished me that whenever there is work to be done at Arenbourg, he wants to be there and that he wants to do the work with the understanding that he isn't selling his time or his work because he wants to do it for the love of doing it. Some people are forever saying that negroes do nothing for the love of anything but some people can be wrong, and it seems to me I know quite a few who like to labor mightily for the feeling that they are doing something for some people whom they sense have a sincere regard for them.

Another negro, recently gone from Melrose to Texas, "made a round", as the expression goes, indicating a brief visit, on Sunday. He told me quite casually that he was thinking of returning to Cane River. He said there were lots of advantages for him in a big city in Texas but that it was quite true that if someone or other wanted a job that another person held, the one who wanted it thought nothing of killing the person who occupied it. Perhaps there is one important foundation stone of the popularity of this region, - the feeling of security. Please don't refer to this last paragraph in correspondence. I must skip.....

1205

1205

May 30th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

No outgoing mail yesterday. An upset stomach kept me in the bed. This morning I am creeping out long enough to jot down this memorandum and to say how nice it was to have the good copies of Life along side me yesterday as I drooped from pillow to bed post. I'll be alright as the day progresses, and by evening, Old Man River is expected to reach this point, and what the rising tide will bring in its wake, heaven alone knows. For one thing, I shall make no effort to appear too radiant. If something has to lapse during a brief interlude of indisposition, it might just as well occur during the time when flood waters of a personal sort are too evident.

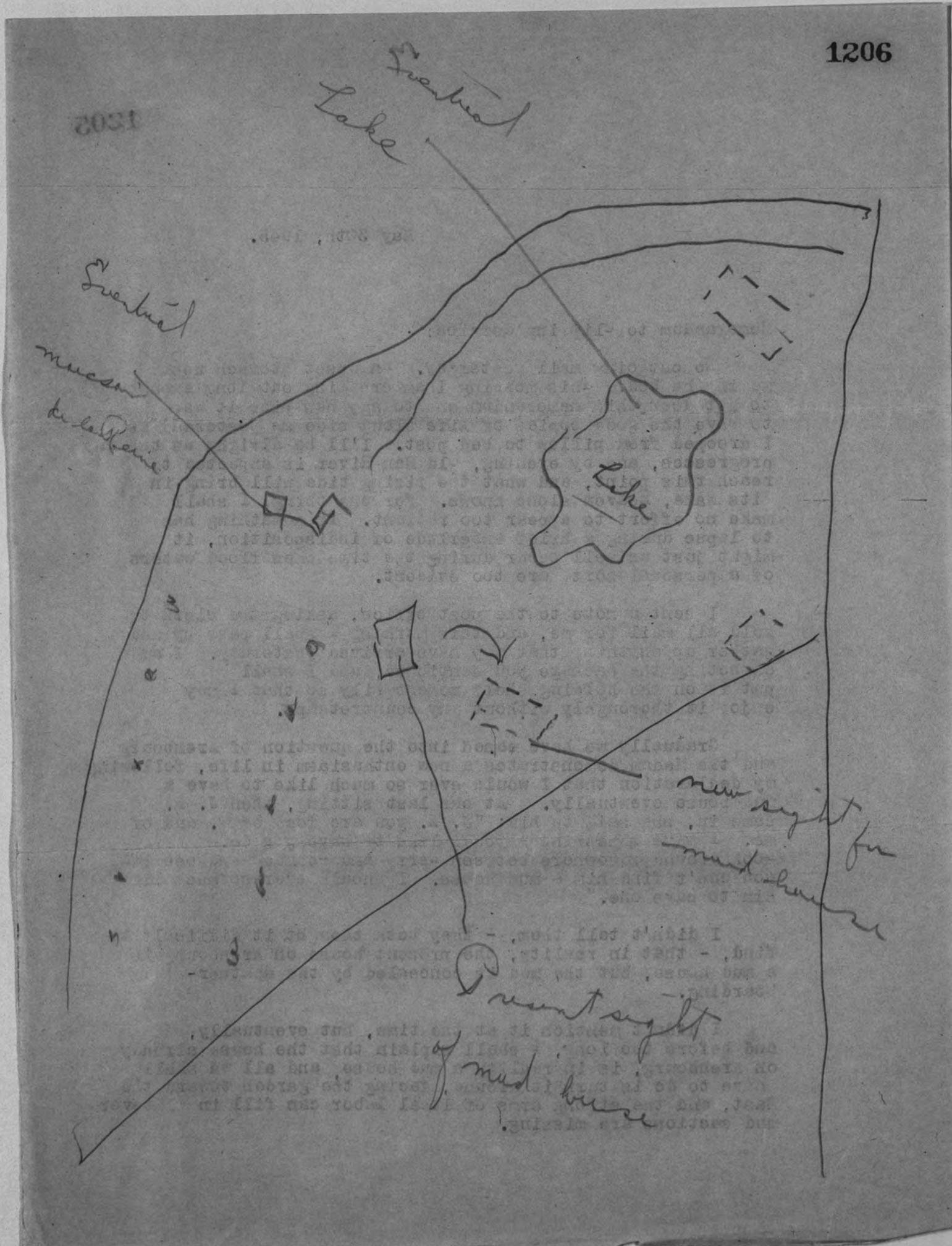
I sent a note to the post office, asking the clerk to hold all mail for me, and this morning I shall pass by and gather up anything that may have arrived yesterday. I am expecting the package you mentioned, and I shall put it on the holding shelf momentarily so that I may enjoy it thoroughly without any countretemps.

Gradually we have eased into the question of Arenbourg and the Madam demonstrates a new enthusiasm in life, following my declaration that I would ever so much like to have a mud house eventually. At our last sitting, when J. H. came in, she said to him: "J. H. you are fond of F. and of me. I have something I would like to have you do. Look around somewhere between Derry and Bermuda and see if you can't find him a mud house. I should ever so much like him to have one."

I didn't tell them, - they both thought it difficult to find, - that in reality, the present house on Arenbourg is a mud house, but the mud is concealed by the weatherboarding.

I didn't mention it at the time, but eventually, and before too long, I shall explain that the house already on Arenbourg, is in reality a mud house, and all we shall have to do is turn it around, facing the garden toward the East, and the strong arms of local labor can fill in whatever mud sections are missing.

1206



1207

On the back of the first sheet, you will note one of those inevitable sketches, indicating the new location for the mud house, with broken lines suggestion eventually placement of other houses. . . You will also note that a pool or little lake is indicated in the center of the piece, with the proposed houses centered about the lake. Although on a very tiny scale, this layout would suggest the *maison de la reine* Tiranon, - wholly informal, as opposed to the more or less formal touch spreading south-west from the proposed *maison de la reine* giving directly on the terrace along the river front. Thus two distinct units will be incorporated in the set up, and it is nice to think that the family is interested in getting the mud house going, as a kind of entertainment for themselves as they make provision for the restoration of the house itself.

"hen moneys come to hand, other units can be added as circumstances appear to favor.

A man from U. S. U. is here at the moment. He is a cotton expert and of all things is named Mr. Cotton. Yesterday he told me of success people are having in making little pools and

lakes, by using "bagotine", - a sub-soil that is brought to the surface by oil drillers. It seems that a quarter of an inch of this sub-soil, mixed with the soil where water is desired, seals the bottom of the pool completely, and permits all kinds of plants and things to grow in the water, with each aquatic plant adding to the strength of the bottom of the pool. He has promised to send me some water lilies, and eventually we shall have the tractor to scoop out a place, throw in some bagotine, and lo! we shall have a little lily lake, wherein the Chinese geese may disport without doing harm either to the pool of the lilies. Mr. Cotton says bagotine ~~costs~~ costs about \$.75 a sack, and only a few sacks would be necessary to give an excellent and everlasting bottom to the pool, - all of which is nice to know about, you will agree.

I am writing Mr. Pipes this morning, and enclosing a letter from little Miss Alberta, addressed to the Madam, - a bread and butter one, wherein she mentions having seen Mr. Ormanson, - or whatever, - the New Orleans publisher, who says he has ample paper supplies and is much interested in the manuscript on Louisiana, and asking that the manuscript be sent him for reading. Whatever the status of the manuscript is at the moment, I know not, but it is pleasant to know that Mr. Ormanson has material at least, and I think the contact will do no harm, even though we may not make use of it immediately. Eventually it might be worth while to skip to New Orleans sometime when J. H. is running down, and have a chat with the gentleman, perhaps together some ideas might evolve that would appeal to him as a publisher of Louisiana stuff and would be within our grasp for composition. The important thing about him is that his book store serves the tourist trade and he pushes his books in all the New Orleans shops, they say, - and that is a point.

1208

1208

I must skip at this point, although there are other points to be covered.

On Monday I received a note from the clerk, saying he had forgot to tell me Saturday evening that Charles had sent in an invitation for me to visit him on Little River for Sunday dinner. A Monday afternoon receipt for the foregoing Sunday, was a little late, I must say. Perhaps it is as well, however, since next Sunday might be a good time to make a round to Little River, should old man river be at flood stage in this area.

I know this is a dumb letter. Please overlook it if you can. I shall probably be back on both feet within a day or two, although should there be a slight lapse in correspondence, you will understand that it is the presence of guests and not indisposition.

As for yourself, I am keeping the thought foremost in my mind that you are going slow and getting a little sunshine when you may....

1209

May 30th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It is 6:00 p.m., and none of the distinguished visitors have shown up as yet.

There was the enclosed letter which was so excellent in parts that I am sending it to you to read, as I knew you would enjoy it. Later I shall transcribe the part about the dentist, and destroy the original, on its return. I can easily have my secretary read it to me. In the event you should not care to return the original, and should prefer to transcribe the part about the dentist and his son, you might do that. I assume, however, that there is little opportunity to transcribe anything at the present time, and hence the suggestion that it might be returned.

I haven't been to the store as yet today, but shall go there shortly, about first dark, in order to get the package which I am told awaits me. I am so anxious to be up and doing shortly in order that I may skip up to Sammy's and try out all the items at a single sitting.

This must be all for the moment.....

P. S.

I might explain that the matter referred to in the opening paragraph of the enclosed letter is quite at variance with facts. Either Roan forgot she wrote me about the matter or was fishing, - which scarcely seems possible. As a matter of fact, the same day Mary wrote about the Virginia matter at Laurel Hill, Roan wrote me, too, and covered the same point. I have in mind to write both ladies and tell them so, enclosing my letter to Roan so that Mary may post it to her if she cares to send it. I certainly would be slipping if I had been guilty of such a error.

1151

1210

June 1st, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Coincidence always fascinates me, and after awakening this morning, humming "Neath the Souther moon, where love is warm and tender", --it was altogether enchanted to open my package and find that self same item, first off.

May I say thanks a million for this perfectly grand collection, which is going to do my heart no end of good during future times. I know not which orchestrations I shall finally like the best, but I know the two songs I shall cling to most fervently, - "Neath the Southern Moon" and, of course "I'll See You Again".

At this sitting, I say thanks. I have sent my Reading Machine to be fixed. When it returns, I shall have these records constantly to hand. A thousand times I shall play them, saying thanks to you at every playing, - and when they are done, I shall go on humming the tunes recorded, and blessing you for the joy you have thus instilled in my heart.

A curious circumstances transpired last night at supper. I am getting to feel right side up again, but am still eating a little sparingly. I bit down on a slice of bread. A front tooth broke off at the gum! And so now if you will imagine very correctly, - although I hope you really will not, - you will have a mental picture of Dracula himself, - which is all very humiliating.

And just to cap the climax, before I left the table, a telephone call came through from Alexandria, regarding the delayed appointment, because of the shut in condition in April and May, for a new appointment for me to speak before a sizeable audience in that place. Of course, with a little makeup, I ought to be able to frighten the people in the audience without any difficulty, but as my proposed talk was of a more ~~peaceful~~ peaceful nature, I thought better of doing such an act, and have prayed the sponsors to put off the matter again until I can get to town and do something about the bridgework department. So things turn in these parts at the moment.

1211

In my last letter, I believe I mentioned the threat of an impending visit from Mr. Saxon, who called the Madam on Friday from New Orleans to say that he and Miss Johnson and somebody else would be here Wednesday evening. In preparation for the visit, chickens were slaughtered, a thousand papers put away, - to be found again with difficulty, etc., etc. - And the up-shot of the whole thing is that here we are at Friday, and as yet not a peep from the Crescent City, nor sign of hide nor hair. So one can make what he will of the thing, and rather surprisingly, the Madam seems to want to give the impression that she thinks it not out of order. Well, perhaps it isn't, but at least it is a different manifestation of social amenities than one is accustomed to up to the present writing.

Pat returned from Columbia Military School in Tennessee on Wednesday night, and will spend the summer here, while preparing to go to L. S. U. this autumn. Yesterday the gardens echoed to the explosions of his rifle, as he banged away at bluejays. He killed a great many, thank Heavens, and one right in the act of pecking the eggs of a catbird's nest. It is such a pity such pretty birds as the bluejays should be such horrible gangsters.

And speaking of catbirds, I think we must do all we can to induce a few families of them to make their homes at Arenbourg. Most people think of a catbird as mee-owing like a cat. They do. But that is merely incidental, for in reality they spend much of their time in warbling with a beauty of song and quality of voice that rivals the mocking bird, and especially along about first sun down, - between then and first dark, - their serenades are perfectly wonderful. I like to envision a pleasant setting, the gallery of Arenbourg at twilight, the smooth tapis vert, the silvery surface of the river, the bridge and the purple hills beyond, - and the whole atmosphere redolent with the catbird's symphony. There are a whole flock of such pleasant situations in the offing. Regardless of little cares of the moment, these greater recompenses are well worth carrying on in the mind, for dreams are the stuff of which future realities are made, and all those dreams are the more enchanting when tintured by the sounds from the throat of the catbird.

I shall fold up for the moment. May I say thanks to you for all the pleasures encased in the grand package to hand, and especially for the two songs that will dominate the other tunes running through my heart today, - and there will be so many, but of all these two will dominate: - "Neath the Southern Moon" and "I'll See You Again".....

1212

June 2nd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

My reader just here. The postman already heading down the lane. Hence this mere note.

Your report was grand. Thanks a million.

Still no news out of New Orleans. May it continue.

In reference to the absence of news from la Grignan, I am not surprised, what with the high water, plans for moving, etc. I think she knows nothing about Arenbourg, although la Devigne and I refer to the latter every once in a while. But rather on the casual side.

I am so glad to hear about Neuschwanstein. Now if the same good news can only be told of Linderhof, then we shall keep intact our dreams of those Paradises en baviere.

I must skip, but shall be back on the morrow. I took a little walk at 2 a.m., today, - it rises late this 2nd of June, but even so, I didn't feel alone "Neath the Southern Moon"...

P. S.

The West "ufaula referred to in the enclosure is Eli "ahiers, of course. I concur with the ideas

expressed therein, but don't think I can stave off the visit.

MSI

1213

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

No out-going mail in yesterday's post. I left for town early. - Mr. Charles Mazurette driving me up, - and the dentist took out the roots of the Dracula appearance, and on Friday, I shall have some more, but much less conspicuous, removed. Eventually I shall have a bridge fixed for the front facade.

The enclosed letter from Mr. Pipes is quite interesting, I think, - and particularly the reference to the Cherokee-Phoenix newspaper. Only vaguely, - if indeed ever, do I recall that there ever were bi-lingual newspapers published in English and Cherokee. It does seem to me little Miss Dormon mentioned some such business at one time, but I am not sure. In any event, I am surprised the thing ever got started and that it should have lasted over a period of years. In the first place, unless I am greatly mistaken, few if any Indians ever read anything, - that is to say, few if any were literate, - and secondly, even if any Indian had the ability to read in those by-gone times, I doubt very much if any or many of them cared much about what any printed word had to say, since his immediate surroundings seems to have been about the only thing concerning an Indian.

And speaking of the illiterate, I ran across an example which would seem strange to me, were I to know of it other than right here. There is a family on Melrose, - frequently referred to as the Mexicans. They seem to have come from the hills of Gorham, behind Derry somewhere, years ago. There are several children in the family, - all in their 30's and 40's. They do not read or write. They are styled White by the Army, and I guess they may be, although being Mexican, they are likely to have a sprinkling of Indian blood, and Heaven knows what else. Be that as it may, one of the girls, - about 35 or 40, helps about the big house. She is considered in the same category as the other colored servants, and the family consorts only with people of color. The other day she came to my house with some errand to discharge. While present, I made some remark about the Bible. She appeared rather non-plused about what I said. I asked her if her folks had a Bible. "Bible?" she inquired. "What's that. I ain't never heard tell of that."

8131

1214

I explained that it was a book, but she shook her head and said she had never heard tell. I asked her if she ever heard of Jesus. She thought hard and said she thought she had heard some white folks sometimes mention the man's name, but she didn't know him.

Really, I ask you, does it seem possible. And yet it is nevertheless true. And there is another difference between the negro of no formal education and the whites. The negro at least has heard tell of, even though he may not have read. But I must say that I would certainly have some mis-givings as to the truth of a statement, were I to read it elsewhere, that there should be a family, living in such a community, even though remote, who could reach 40 and escape ever having heard of The Bible.

Up to the present writing, - and I take time out to knock wood, nothing has been seen or heard of Mr. Saxon. So be it. "Unenlightened niggers are so undependable", I hear people say. If he will only remain where ever he is at for the moment, I shall certainly be grateful.

And speaking further of negroes, I crossed Cane River early Sunday morning to visit my barber. Jack was already doing big business on his front gallery, - Fugabon was there, and Clyde Claude Emmett Davis (Clemence's son-in-law), and Jack's brother, Ezra, and Roy Kimble, a little drunk, and one or two others. Roy was doing much talk about his few acres between Little and Red Rivers. It seems he would like to sell them at some advantageous price. To quote him directly:

"If I could only get a good price for that land, I sure would sell it and just enjoy being a millinery".

Returning from town yesterday, Mr. Charles and I brought out Miss Ida Campbell with us to spend a few days. Before the Madam came to "elrose to live, Miss Ida (pronounced Eeda") lived in the big house, her father looking after the place for the Henrys who then lived at Perry. - Miss Ida can remember back to the 1870's, and I am pumping her for all she is worth, which is quite a lot. In appearance she reminds me a bit of a plump Billie Burke, and although rather light, has a wonderful memory, and in her girlhood was forever flying from party to party with the Prudhommes and all the crowd from La Cote Joyeuse. She knew so many people in Leston's Diary, and possibly something can eventually be done with some of these particulars, long since forgotten. I shall save them in my mind and in my notes for eventual consideration.....

8131

1215

June 6th, 1945. If I have a memorandum to Clipping Service: A brief report, mere sketchy symbols of a vast array of thoughts which constantly flow telepathetically, as from here to there...

I spent quite a bit of time with Miss Ida yesterday. I guess she is in her 80's, and accordingly she knew almost everyone in these parts who figured in the ante bellum picture.

My concept of Cane River, and especially La Cote Joyeuse, has expanded broadly and in depth, as I have chatted with her. The 8 or 10 or 15 miles stretch from just above Melrose on to Natchitoches in ante bellum times really must have been extraordinary from the number of plantation homes bordering the river and the hospitality dispensed therein. Yesterday she had much to tell me of the Emile Sainte-Anne Prudhommes, whose house was the largest and finest along the river in those days, with its grand galleries, its ample gardens, its spacious park, etc. It was burned by the Yankees, along with the 400 other homes that went up in flames in 1864. For those who visited this region for the first time in the 1880's or early 1900's little or no concept of the setting can be gleaned, so successfully has vegetation drawn a mantle over the places where once a high point in social amenities were the order of the day.

Just as the lower Woodville Road, stretching southward from Natchez was the American Apian Way, - grand and unsurpassed in its great mansions and incredible number of millionaires, so, it would seem to me, that La Cote Joyeuse was unique in another fashion, - uninterrupted progression of plantation homes, - some early and slave-built, others elegant and evidencing exquisite orders of architecture of the more finished school. It was a place almost exclusively Prudhomme, for nearly everyone was kin, the whole population somehow evolving from the first to bear the name and to receive the vast land grant from the King of France. It was less mighty in the great concentration of wealth as was apparant on the Lower Woodville Road in Natchez, but possibly more intimate and more concerned with the lesser but more intimate doings of life, where incomes of thousands of dollars provided the pleasures of pleasant social exchanges as contrasted with the incomes of hundreds of thousands of dollars where things were done on a more colossal but less personal scale.

1216

1216

A letter from Essae Mae indicates that Miss Ramsey was called to Marshall, Texas early in May to attend her father and mother would were taken ill at that time. It is said Miss Ramsey plans to come to Elrose later this month. All the things coming to hand from Miss Ida will be set aside as personal research, and I shall see what may be done with them on some other project, not designed for the Saturday Evening Post or Life. There is enough stuff around here to treat Cane River in a more popular style of which Miss Ramsey may make use. The other material, just come to hand, may be employed to better advantage, perhaps, when Ames and I have an opportunity to turn to that at a later sitting.

La Belle Essae Mae remarked in her letter that she knew Mr. Saxon had been to St. Francisville and to New Iberia during the past month, and realized, of course, that coming from New Orleans, he had to pass through Baton Rouge. But that in spite of all that had gone before, she had heard nothing from him, - which is not surprising, in a way, - but not a very nice way.

I intended to mention before that in the matter of the Vigee Lebrun business, you committed no indiscretion in mentioning the local lady by name. My reader is wonderful in that he is both indifferent to what he reads, - which is splendid, under the circumstances, - and secondly, he never makes a peep to anyone as to what the subject matter may be, - which may be either a virtue, or perhaps mere indifference.

I am forced to break off at this point, what with people waiting to see me, but even though the written word trails off at this point, the telepathetically coded thoughts will continue to flow along steadily until I again sit myself down to this machine before so very long.....

.....

1217

June 9th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Only a paragraph to say that everything is going along alright, although a temporary misere has made sitting still difficult, - what with four extractions yesterday, and the medecine for the same just wearing off about now.

Nothing out of Klahoman since my last report, but there will be in a day or so, I think. I reckon the enclosure from Natchez speaks for itself.

I shall pen a report within the next day or so. This is merely to say I am quite close in touch with a parfait secretaire by thought wave, even though I am falling down on the job in the report section for the moment.....

CISI

1218

June 10th 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It is good to awaken this morning to find that the all-engulfing hold of the "misere" department has been broken, and that one's faculties may once more function normally, without the blight of yesterday's pain.

"There is a good dentist in town, - one to whom the Henrys go on occasion. He is, - chemically speaking, - a hill-billy in personality. You know the type, - every cell of the individual's personality and being containing some sort of an acid which radiates an alum like taste whenever it encounters anyone with a non-chemical content. In the South, I suppose I have merely concentrated a vague feeling, generally prevailing, - when I relegate all such people into a general category of "hill-billy", - as opposed to the people, - in the other group, - who live in the bottoms. The hill billy is characterized primarily by that chemical content with which he is born, I suppose, and can as readily appear at birth in the river bottoms as in the up country, but hill-billy covers his type. Narrow, ignorance, conceit and inhuman are some of the adjective which best describe his more obvious attributes.

And of some of these adjectives is the dentist possessed, - and primarily a natural resentment against river bottom concepts, - but he is, nevertheless, a good dentist, they say, and so I reckon he will fashion a facade shortly and I can give up the veil which I now keep constantly before me, in consideration for those who come in contact with me.

Your most excellent letter to hand in yesterday's post, and May I say thanks a million for all the nice things it contained, and for the transcription of the Episcopal business which you were so good as to make for me. At the moment, I don't know exactly how I am going to make use of those two pages, and yet I have a feeling that they are going to serve some excellent purpose eventually for a glimpse and an illuminating picture of one contemporary problem in racial relations.

The more I give thought to racial antipathies in this section, the more I am persuaded that much of it stems from fear, and much of it springs from those same chemical ingredients as mentioned at the outset of this letter.

1219

A case in point, relative to the latter, was illustrated one day this week. I may have told you that a year or so ago, Miss Alberta did a portrait of the Black Swan for me. I had her touch it up a little during her last visit, and varnish it for me.

On Thursday, some ladies passed by Melrose for a little chat. One of them, - a 50 year old daughter of a cultivated gentleman and Judge, asked about the identity of the "nigger" in the portrait. I explained that it was a likeness of the first American opera singer. Automatically one could feel the atmosphere constrict. Instead of welcoming the opportunity to know something of the lady's history, or to experience a mild and justified pride in the realization that someone from her section possessed this distinction, her only remark was:

"What a horribly cruel face she has!"

It is merely a brief sentence, but it seems to me to concentrate all the signs of hill-billyism and racial resentment. Had the portrait been of a white person, I have no doubt the lady would have manifested vast enthusiasm for the beauty of the portrait, the facial expressions, etc., and have glowed a little around the gills at the thought that it was a Southern woman who carried off the palm of such a distinguished "first".

Thus the white woman, not quite certain of the superiority of her own race, and fearful lest a woman of another race might outshine the vaunted white superiority, were an honest comparison to be made, avoids a comparison or even a recognition of the Black Swan's gifts by turning aside the point in question and pointing out the ugliness of her personal appearance.

In the realm of Art, there is a splendid example of the river bottom's versus the hill-billy personality. - Da Vinci epitomizes the river bottoms, Michael Angelo the hill-billy. Ub cibtentiaart politics, Mr. Roosevelt or Senator Fulbright represents the river bottoms, Senator Taft the hill-billy.

Just why I should have carried on at such lengths about something which is so obvious and trite, I know not, save that I may not yet be quite back to normalcy and minor considerations get top heavy in discussions of the moment.

Between this paragraph and the one above, - after a couple of other interruptions, - I have listened interruptedly to Invitation to Learning, a Columbia Broadcasting feature, ~~xxxx~~ given each Sunday at 11:30 Eastern War Time. I reckon it comes over your WABC station. I get it here out of Shreveport.

1220

I reckon 11:30 is not a very convenient time for you to do much radio listening on Sunday, - especially if you should not chance to be associated at that moment with kindred souls. The program is usually wonderful, - and I think I may have referred to it before to you, although I am not certain.

Next week they are going to do the poetry of William Butler Yeats, - which I know not at all, and as there was static when they mentioned what would be presented on the following week, I cannot say what that will be about.

Today they spoke of Lawrence's Seven Pillars of Wisdom, and if you did chance to hear it, I think you will agree with me that it was very, very worth while. Never having read the book, everything they had to say about it was enlightening to me. As is usually the case in such discussions, there is quite a bit of information about and opinions of the author, as well as about his writing.

I heard a fragment of their discussion about Poe - Edgar Allen Poe, some weeks back. I think I may have mentioned at the time that it was the consensus of opinion at that time that his greatest combination of words was

"The viol, the violet and the vine".

A combination one finds therein that is not unlike, - although not identical with a combination, popular at the turn of the present century, -

"Wine, women and song".

I think I am inclined to subscribe to the Poe version rather more than to the latter combination, - Poe's viol standing for music, of course, the violet for flowers, of course, and the vine being symbolic of good cheer.

And I guess I like that better because it somehow presupposes that men and women may be identical in their enthusiasms, and accordingly women are not set off as something in the category of wine and song.

I heard them discuss Tolstoy's Anna Karenina two or three weeks ago, and I learned much about the book and the author that were unknown to me before, but I got even more out of the discussion, I think, because it made me think, especially in that section wherein I did not entirely agree with the conclusions the experts came together on.

0831

1221

As I recall, the experts came to the conclusion that Tolstoy was trying to paint some sort of a moral picture, - collecting the several pigments of life and classifying them into groups, labeled "White" and "Black", or "Good" or "Bad", or "Moran" or "Immoral".

For me the Tolstoy novel was wonderful from a lot of angles, not the least of which was the fact that after reading it, I came to feel that Tolstoy, even as ~~last~~ I as a child, had realized, - and set down in print the fact that elements in life cascade upon us in such a variety of colors, that at best we have difficulty in realizing which sections of it are lighter or darker gray, - and that it was only as immature children that we supposed that white was white and black was black and that was all there was to it.

I guess the next most impressive thing about that novel to me when I read it at the age of about 15 was the startling recognition I had of people whom I knew in the characters he portrayed, - including myself, - my own virtues and vices, my own uncertainty as to whether anything, any deed any person could be set down as good or bad. And I still recall the wave of something akin to a sense of sacrilege when I found myself actually paraphrasing Abraham Lincoln's remark about God eventitently favoring common people. He made so many of them, by telling myself, as I turned through Anna Karenina that God must have had something of a sympathetic regard for human weakness. He made so many people who were lacking in positive Ten Commandment virtues.

So much for Invitation to Learning, Columbia System, on Sundays at 11:30 Eastern War Time. Grab it if you can, but if you can't get it satisfactorily, be rejoiced that it is one of those blessings that is likely to appear long and with greater frequency in times to come, - and naticipation pays a generous dividend

Still no word from Lyle, - and may it so continue. I must agree with you that the kindest thing that can be said is that it is a mighty curious business. In yesterday's mail to the Madam was a letter from Mary Rose and Roark (Brandford), from Santa Fe, where they have been living. After a couple of years, it was their first letter, - excepting Christmas cards. The Madam is wondering why the sudden break through. She doesn't know what Mr. Pipes told us, - that Roark would be in Oklahoma City before long, - or rather at the University of Oklahoma, for some kind of a pow-wow. I reckon they are scouting the idea that they might be passing through the Cane River from Oklahoma to New Orleans, - but that of course, is merely a guess. So be it, - I don't need to see them really, - at least not Mary Rose. What a bag! - And in speaking of the latter, I carry off the palm myself, for having turned out such a hodge-podge communication, - which certainly deserves an apology.....

0831

1222

June 12th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Twenty-five times twenty-five million thanks would be quite inadequate to express the delicacy of feeling that surges up when one considers with gratitude not only the concrete expression of sympathy, but even more, the sensitivity that prompts such a demonstration.

A report to hand, - in two parts, - and somehow the gapping facade already seems the nearer back to normalcy, just by the advent of the dual reports.

It is generally felt that repairs will be accomplished within the next month or six weeks, and in view of services rendered hereabouts in a variety of undertakings, there is a possibility that the expenses may in part or in whole may be charged off as against these services rendered. The uncertainty, however, of effecting this conclusion has not been entirely allayed, but now, with the advent of the characteristic report, always so unfailing in good times and bad, the assurance that the matter can be accomplished without a hitch does much for the nerve department. Then, too, there is the added thrill in the equally added effort that will be expended to repair the facade from unpaid income for services rendered locally, with the hope that the items coming to hand by post may in part or in whole, be conserved to hold as a fund for initial undertakings on Arenbourg when the crop has been taken off. Like Mr. Shakespeare's mercy, - "it is twice blest, - it blesseth him that gives and him that takes", - for Arenbourg is a mutual aspiration, and in the event the present facade is accomplished through other and possible forthcoming considerations, then Arenbourg and all concerned will be the winner. May I say a million thanks again?

In my last note, I intended to refer to old Baedecker, but forgot it. It occurs to me that Baedecker's (I know not how to spell it, but I think you know the "guide books I mean"), - that Baedecker's Guides to Germany, published, of course, prior to 1939, should be of exceeding interest right away, and most certainly within the years to come.

(over)

1223

What with the manner of reporting war news and the consideration of propaganda and all that, one is of course uncertain as to the precise amount of damage done to Germany as a result of air raids, commonading and all the usual destruction accompanying hostilities. Surely there must have been scores of interesting places obliterated, and as the years go by, even the memory of them will be forgotten, and even though they may be mentioned in later guide books, the details will be missing.

Accordingly, it would seem to me that should one run across any guide books covering Germany in particular, and England and the Low Countries generally, it might serve, both from a collectors point of view and from one's own desire to recall what was what before the big bang to lay hold of some of these publications. I presume it is quite possible that you may already be well supplied with these items, but I mention them just in case you should chance to run up against an odd volume on some bargain shelf. I reckon almost any dealer might be glad to give the things a place on the bargain table at ten cents or some such figure, in case he should not consider their inordinate value in providing a picture of the Europe that was once but will never be again, save when someone like Cedric Gibbon reconstructs it for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer or some such.

About today, I reckon, the Saturday Review of Literature, as mention in the report, will be coming to hand, and I shall immediately turn to the 14th page to investigate the fine article you mention. Wasn't it grand that you should chance upon this following your earlier good luck in finding a parallel subject for Mr. Pipes last autumn. I know he will be as thrilled as I, and I am sure the sentiments of all three will vibrate in satisfaction as individually we pursue the lines.

I am so glad to hear that the wedding business went off so nicely, and apparently the prolonged silence on the part of the bride and groom must indicate they are busy as bees getting their new lives arranged. May you find that only because of the happiness that covers them keeps them from breaking out of their crystal and resuming contact with the outside world.

1224

Mention was made in the latest report of the pleasure to be realized in devoting one's energies to research in the historical department rather than in the present line of endeavor. How whole heartedly I subscribe to that feeling, and how firmly I believe in its ultimate realization. Somehow the recent marriage seemed to me but another turn in the kaleidoscope that brings nearer the realization of this hope. Arenbourg represents one turn, the marriage another, and so with patience, other turns will come, so that eventually the whole picture will come into view precisely as we would have it..

The virtues as possessed by our collaborator will be greatly enhanced and increased in value when in the role of liason secretaire, the efforts in the literary field may be the more perfectly bridged and added strength to the undertakings accomplished through those efforts.

At the moment I am slowly arranging some of the Old Natchez Scrapbook columns with a view to eventual binding, - arranging each in successive order, - 1806, 1802, 1817, 1820 and so on. At random I have had some of these read off to me, - the columns themselves, and I notice the difference in tone, as between those which I constructed and those which were accomplished exclusively by my collaborator. I cannot say that one was superior to the other, but they are strikingly different. It is with this in mind that I say a liason officer might readily have effected a fusion and the differences in feelings of the two would have been smoother and possibly better in the case of each type.

The next turn of the glass, bringing the focus a step nearer, will, I hope, be the beginning of some income which will be another step along the road to Arenbourg and the more perfect functioning of the whole literary effort.

Patience is a leisurely figure and Impatience impells us to tread on the heels of the former oft times. But getting the most out of today's situation and keeping a firm hold on our faith that tomorrow we shall be a step nearer the desired end, and things are bound to turn as we would have them. The latest report, in its several brackets has given me a firmer hold than ever on that faith, and as indicated above, may its blessings be two fold.....

1225

3531

June 14th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I begin this note by remarking that twenty five times 25 million little sensations of gratitude continue sparkling inside me, and somehow these tiny explosion seem like the vitalizing effervescence one contemplates with admiration in a decanter of precious wine. Praises be to God for the grape and the vintner.

With tomorrow marking a week since my major misere was accomplished, I continue to go in heavily for Anacoin and Asperin, but things are moving in the right direction, even though leisurely.

Yesterday morning, I brought Miss Ida over to this house to sit with me for a couple of hours, and to call up a lot of things in her memory. At the moment, we are taking one Prudhomme plantation after another, and she is telling me the identity of the ante bellum owners, their children, the location in town of their Matchitoches place, who married whom, and a hundred little details regarding the plantation or its people. Yesterday we did the Emile St. Anne Prudhomme place and the Archille Prudhomme place. There were lots of extraneous details and allied personalities dragged in, such as Lestan's father, Sadio, his little brother, Julie, his sister, and so on.

All these particulars may never be of any use, and yet if we should eventually attempt something of record for this region, these details might be most helpful. Miss Ida, at 85, is about the last of the inhabitants of sense and memory, who can recall the people and personalities of this upper crust of Matchitoches society, stretching back into ante bellum times.

In these conversations, the Prudhomme kingdom seems to separate itself into three natural divisions, - from just above Malrose, - know as the Ile Brevelle section, on North some 20 miles, knows as la Cote Cyeuse, and so on north about 20 miles to Kampti, the latter section always being referred by that name. - The Ile, the Cote and Kampti.

1226

If you lived "on the Coast" you figured among the elect; if you lived at either extremity, - the Ile or Kampti, you were among the chosen of the Parish; but if you did not live along Cane River or Red, within the somewhat elastic limits of these three sections, making up the single unit, then you were considered as a human being, but of definitely second rate standing, and you really didn't matter much. The Prudhommes, for the most part, were the lords of the regions, and there were just enough exceptions, in matters of property and wealth, - such as Mr. Leconte, below Melrose, at Agnolia, to give definite exceptions to a situation which almost seemed to forego the possibility of any exceptions whatsoever.

As I reckon it, the more wealthy families of this section figured their holdings in valuations ranging in the hundreds of thousands, in contrast to the Adams County aristocracy which totaled theirs in the millions. In the Natchitoches area, life was pleasant, nearly everyone had a plantation on the river and a modest dwelling in town, while in Adams County life was inclined toward the grand, and for the most part, the single residence in a wooded park close to town or actually on the plantation received the concentrated interest of its owner. Pleasure rather than intellect seems to have characterized the Natchitoches area, with the planter giving personal attention to his production of the staple, leisurely withal, and his day broken up into two or three rounds of prolonged dinners and suppers, peopled with relatives and friends around the board. In Adams County, on the other hand, the planter was less of a farmer than an executive, delegating the actual means of production of cotton to lieutenants, his personal pursuits being more intellectual than social, with the latter activity concentrated more in the occasional lavish entertainments, whether intellectual or purely social, and his interests covering a larger sphere, both in intellectual interests and financial operations, running concurrently along side his actual agricultural operations.

The boundaries of Natchitoches Parish just about marked the limits of the Cote Joyeuse planter. The entire States of Mississippi and Louisiana easily fell into the general mental picture of the Adams County aristocrat. No planter of Ile Brevelle, la Cote Joyeuse or Kampti ever wrote a Geographic Survey of Louisiana, as did the scribes of Mississippi. No Cote Joyeuse physician did more than concern himself with the individual patients in his elected group. It was for Adams County to produce a Dr. Monette or a Dr. Cartwright, to take in the whole Mississippi Valley in a glance and the consideration of the ills of all humanity in their stride. It is true that Aunt Houppé did write a letter, - a classic, on advising her son in regard to life in general. But Aunt Houppé wasn't typical of Ile Brevelle or the Coast, for even her son, according to Miss Ida, was illegitimate, - and accepted as a matter of course, because his mother was so distinctively individualistic. But it remained for someone like Dr. Butt of Natchez to write

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treatises on cotton culture that would benefit, not a single individual, but all the planters throughout the entire South.

These are some of the aspects of the Kingdom of the Prudhommes, and I contrast them at random as they come to mind, with the situation obtaining at the same time in Natchez, - the differences being so glaring that the individual concepts in Natchitoches Parish seeming the more clearly defined as one hold them up against the parallel civilization 150 miles to the East. Possibly the difference might be illustrated by merely mentioning the two rivers along which each flourished and withered, - Cane River and the Mississippi. The Cane River country was certainly remote, and strangely enough, its cultural capital was Paris. As Miss Ida explains, even in reconstruction times, all the people on the Coast were forever saying: "En France this," and "en France that". Whereas in Natchez the locality, while aloof, was actually on the great American highway, which in ante bellum times brought everyone by your door and took you any place on the continent. New Orleans and Philadelphia, - rather than Paris, was the intellectual focal points around which Adams County swung, and its people spoke English or American, while Paris was a place from which one purchased china and expensive bric-a-brac but not an education.

I apologize for taking up so much of your time with a subject which cannot be of more than hazy interest. My excuse is that "renbourg is a place that will eventually come into closer view, and perhaps it will seem a little nearer because of these altogether vague fragments that are being saved from the wreck of forgotten foundations, the very existence of which is scarcely known by more than two or three people in the entire Parish today.

1228

June 15th, 1946.

Memorandum to Clipping Service: Thanks no end for your splendid report, to hand by air, together with the exhaustive clipping from the Herald-Tribune, which seems to have covered about everything save a true picture of what was reputedly being reported.

With characteristic selflessness and generosity, you ask my opinion, under the circumstances, as to the wish on my part to maintain contact until the storm blows over.

My answer is immediate and direct: I do.

Correspondence, to my way of thinking, is the life blood of friendship. Life without friends would be worthless. For myself if the present life blood were to be interrupted, life would be meaningless. As so often proven in the past by a soul more courageous than mine, friendship, if real, functions even more faithfully in storm than in fair weather. If a storm is in the offing, my friendship will flow along regardless of the flapping of the storm flags. Unless you feel otherwise, let us maintain the present contact, - so few things in life are really worth while, and this is so precious.

In the same post that brought the Herald-Tribune clipping, came a much briefer one, with no names mentioned, from Shreveport. Being shorter, it sounded much more sinister and gave the Madam quite a start. But that was only temporary when I pointed out its cock-eyed presentation of facts. Then, too, the mind was diverted in another direction when a telephone call came from town, from the telegraph office, saying a telegram had just been received for Miss Frances Johnson, and was she here. Well, she wasn't, but one naturally assumes that old man river might be expected to be somewhere in the offing if an address for messages for la Johnson has been given as this place.

(over) Ever since the initial report, there will be comparatively little more on the matter generally. But if there should be a lot of particular added later, I am determined to maintain my belief that often things which are very trying when they transpire, frequently in the end turn out to be advantageous in their ultimate solution, and the thought gives courage to carry one through and the promise of brighter sunshine after rain is the recompense God gives when dark clouds first appear on the horizon. Besides there is always a friend

1229

In the same post came a very nice letter from "an," in response to my thank you note regarding Arenbourg. In his letter he remarked: "What the place needs is more people like you", - and for a usually somewhat taciturn personality, such a statement, I thought, was altogether gracious.

Miss Ida will remain for two or three days longer, and each day we continue our sittings. Born in 1857, she readily recalls practically everyone who figures in the 1851 diary, since practically all of those characters were still alive when she became a young lady and moved in the same circles as revolved about la Gote Joyeuse for two or three decades before and after the Confederate War.

Sometimes my notes go into something of a tangle, as I jot down her conversation as she speaks. This is due to the fact that so many of the individual families figured at least three or four generations of people, each succeeding one bearing the same first name. For example, we were yesterday doing the Antoine Prudhommes, - and there were the grandfather, father and son, all bearing the same name, and while we were detailing things about Antoine, he grandfather, before I knew it we had moved to the father, and I discovered that I inadvertently was taking down a description of the latter's place 20 miles from the grandfathers of which I had thought I was writing. But I am going over these notes with Miss Ida, once they are completed, so that in the end, she will have an opportunity to correct and add to them, and I shall have an opportunity to correct any errors.

I saw Clemence yesterday. She was in quite a gay mood. He said she had practically completed the flower designs on various colored papers, recently supplied. He also remarked that a whole flock of hill-billies, from somewhere back of Derry, had come fishing at the spillway near her home, and seeing the pictures through the doorway as they passed her house, they wanted to buy some, but she of course wouldn't sell. She said they were a sight, - the whole flock of people, "everyone of the men and the ladies all bear feated", - which I lived very much.

Reverting to the Herald-Tribune, I am under the impression that following the initial report, there will be comparatively little more on the matter generally. But if there should be a lot of particulars added later, I am determined to maintain my belief that often things which are very trying when they transpire, frequently in the end turn out to be advantageous in their ultimate solution, and the thought gives courage to carry one through and the promise of brighter sunshine after rain is the recompense God gives when dark clouds first appear on the horizon. Besides there is always a friend.....

1230

June 15th-16th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To write you this brief line at the close of a busy, busy day, when high blood pressure has been too much in the ascendency, everyone is exhausted, and tonight at 10, old man river telephoned from some 150 miles south of here, saying that he and Miss Johnson and the colored driver would be here about 2 a.m.

The Madam never heard of such business. "either did I. But it doesn't seem so much out of line with other curious doings of the past year. After all, they do have to come straight through Alexandria to get here, and arriving at such an hour, - for it will surely be midnight when they reach that place, I would think they would linger there until morning, as the hotels are very comfortable there.

Well, having tired of spilling oil on troubled waters this evening, I took a long walk along the round of Arenbourg, after the big house had folded up. Naturally there was great expediency when I returned and the Madam and Pat awaited to tell me of our impending visitors, and I rolled up my sleeves to get a lot of my stuff out of the way, especially private papers, personal belongings, etc., etc. I am frankly tired, and probably facing something more so before dawn.

But I did want to get off this brief report to you, both to thank you for your very nice and thoughtful one in today's post, and to explain that I may not get within reach of a machine for a day or two, if the visitors prove too much for the established routine. It looks as though they had already proven that point before ever reaching here, - and all this being the first peep we have heard since a month or so ago, when on Friday he telephoned to say they would be here on the following Wednesday.

I was much impressed by your account of someone's interpretation of the Herald-Tribune business. I reckon to elude to this in my next letter. I am
.....

1231

the whole thing may boil down to about that. It would appear that had anything serious been contemplated, it would have transpired long before this. Trials covering charges, suggested in the article, are usually not delayed. As you pointed out, there may be a little filler for the newspapers and magazines, but I reckon that will be about all.

As for correspondence, too, - and regardless of actualities, had there been any reason for intercepting personal mail, this would have been done ever and ever so long ago, - probably 1942, at least, so there would be no point in breaking off anything, that means so much at this time, - and henceforth may this most precious of contemporary possessions be allowed to continue uninterrupted.

It seem like quite a time since I have heard from Dora. Possibly he has made some new finds and is working mightily on them. I must get him off a little note tonight before I fold up my beard in my chair before the revelers arrive.

Regardless of arrivals at this place, prior to Sunday, I intend mounting a horse early-early on that day, and riding back to Little River where I shall spend the day with my friends. I shall probably be tired, but it will be a great relaxation, and already Charles has written me a note, - in large script, detailing a menu, calculated to entice me, - for it includes ice tea, ice cream, etc., all of which he knows I like.

There was some other point I wanted to cover, but it eludes me at the moment, and so I shall let this go for tonight.

It is so kind of you to have informed me so fully on current particulars, and I shall hold my fingers crossed, on the assumption that the noise in the Herald-Tribune will get lost in the general shuffle, and that the whole business will fall back, forgotten in the rush of other matters, and buried forever in the files from whence it was extracted.

Arenbourg looked so peaceful and lovely tonight in the moonlight. There isn't anything particularly pretty about it from the road, and the moon was but half full, and yet, in thinking of a couple of tomorrows, it held all the promise of peace and happiness, and I thought much of someone far away, and Arenbourg seemed so beautiful.....

1232

June 18th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

A hurried report, on a typewriter with which I am not familiar.

He arrived at 2 a.m. on Friday night, or rather Saturday morning. Quite drunk, and drank until 5. He looks about 75 years old, is as thin as a reed, but talks as though the mental department were functioning normally.

Miss Johnson (Johnston) seems to be something in personality like a harnett kane and in appearance like a female rendition of Mr. Woolcott. She has more nerve than anyone I know. I droppe her to town on Saturday evening. She noted about 200 houses and cabins along the road, and possibly 50 in town she will photograph. She told me if I would kindly list these properties, the names of the owners, etc. She also said she would be back in September and on the 20th she would be able to go to Natchez. In that place the ladies of both clubs had told her that only one person they knew of was acquainted with the houses hidden away in the traces and that I was that person. She accordingly pointed out that she thought that she could probably get all her work done in photographing them within ten days. My response was to the point. I didn't know when I was going to Natchez, and whenever there I was very busy on my own endeavors. Imagine, - having the never to expect me to do all the work for her save actually photographing the stuff. What she needs is somebody or some group of somebodies to make it possible for her to turn the horns of plenty and the trumpets of fame in her direction. Well, I shall have no part in any of it.

It seems she doesn't take portraits, and so that lets her out so far as Clemence is concerned. Knowing me as you do, You can readily appreciate that I would be glad to give the old girl, - 82, a hand in any old direction I could, but I am like a mule when somebody like her thinks all she has to do is tell me what she needs and expects me to hand out, just as though I were to consider the honor of being with her as sufficient glory and recompense. Well, it isn't.

I spent the Sandy on Little River. It was grand. There was a funeral at the little church there, and I saw a great many of my friends on the road. Leaving here about sun up, I had an opportunity to spend several hours along that dreamy bayou before going to to have dinner with Charles and Ida. I got back here about 5.

On Saturday, old man river was sick and sent for the doctor. his servant told me the day before he had eaten one tomatoe and had drunk three quarts of whiskey. Strange & he didn't feel too well.

But as of Saturday afternoon, he has reformed. He is never going to drink any more, - etc., etc., etc.

(over)

1233

I am writing this in the office, - and there is much confusion with the usual commotion that attends a busy Sunday Monday morning in any organization.

I shall therefore fold up at this point, coming back again whenever circumstances permit. The postman has just come, - terribly early for him, and I notice a small envelope addressed to me. I shall treasure it until this evening when I shall find a quiet spot where I can share life for a moment with a friend, thanks to the blessings of postal conversations.....

P. S.

I must append a curious thing. It seems that his assistant in Writers Project, - and one with whom I was never especially close, is now assistant to Walter Frese, which may or may not somewhat alter any decision on the manuscript in that office. Isn't it odd how strange people get in strange places at strange times.

I would add too, that the local schedule calls for a departure of all this mess, as of Wednesday of this week, weather for photographing in the mean time, and improvement in the health situation, making that possible. As for him, he cannot get out of a chair by himself, nor can he walk across the room without being supported by someone. That's the way things are muddled up here at the moment.

1234

June 19th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I have your report, and have enjoyed it not once but a million times, as I have rehearsed in my mind the several details touched therein, - from perruques to pre-seasonal heat.

Now that you, too, are a braid, I am trying to picture in my mind just how things appear with you in the role of La Belle Ferroniere, but somehow the former hair-do seems to dominate all the mental pictures I summon up. But regardless of that, I am enchanted that the new arrangement gives some suggestion of frigidair in the temperature department, and more power to you.

As for Sunday's invitation to learning, I missed out on it, as indicated in my letter of yesterday. Next Sunday I am expecting to get back into the group of people who like that hour on Sunday mornings.

It will be pleasant to think of you as being able to arrange your hours on week ends in such a fashion as will harmonize with personal impulses, and the summer will suit me the better just to think of the possibility on your part.

I noted with interest your reference to the Devigne correspondence, and the request for confidential communications. In every line of communication there has always been a tendency on the part of that correspondent to treasure everything from everyone, (interruption) whether it be patent medicine advertisements or personal friends. I mention this in order that for the most part, unless they can be disposed of otherwise, - I have been quite successful in that line, they are preserved. Another interruption, -

And so to get on with the local scene.

It had been planned that old man river would return to his hotel on Thursday, - his valet driving la Johnston's car, - with the lady going back with them. Yesterday, about 2:30, while I was at the big house, the valet came a jumping, asking me to come over. I came. The son in law had taken him off liquor on Saturday. By Monday afternoon he was craving it so badly that he was out of his mind. He was shaking with the worst case of jitters I ever saw. He was talking a mile a minute, indicating by his words he thought he was in bed in the lobby of the St. Charles hotel. He wanted to escape, etc., etc.

1235

Eventually we got his physician, who gave him a sedative. It was then decided he should return to the Crescent City immediately. Accordingly an ambulance was summoned. I stood by his bed from three until six, and before 5:30, the sedative had brought some reason to his mind again. I had explained to the physician, - the son in law, that there were two patients to be considered, - the inebriate and his hostess, who was obviously worn out, and likely to suffer from exhaustion if something to relieve her worry were not done before long. I recommended that she be told that the patient was resting quietly, and so give her a chance to relax a little. With characteristic dumbness, the son in law, going to the big house, recommended that his mother in law come and sit with the patient, already in the hands of the valet and myself. After bringing her here the physician went home.

And so I sat on the gallery with the servant while the hostess and guest sat inside, - the guest rattling along a mile a minute, as above, but more logical in his talk. This kept up from 5:45 until 8:15, when the ambulance came and took the guest and the servant to New Orleans. By that time the hostess was but completely exhausted, and fell into her bed. I know not how she is at this hour, on the following morning, but I know well enough there will be plenty of high blood pressure and accompanying irritability for about a week probably.

And so la Johnston will probably depart on Thursday according to schedule and Pat will probably drive her to New Orleans and return on the bus. I hope Miss Alberta and Miss Johnston have proven to themselves how good it is for the man to come to the country and its beneficial effect (s) on one in his condition.

For her part, yesterday noon, Miss Johnston took a couple of shots of the Madam and of the Madam and me before the foliage in front of the big house. They a lot of trees and bushes were cut down, to get a good picture of the big house. I was all in favor of the cutting, as there was too vast a jungle before they started, and there will be too much left when they are finished.

I would assume that we shall not have the pleasure of entertaining the guest again for a few weeks at least. He has reformed again, and may come here to recuperate, but I think both possibilities are remote. Of all this, you might skip any reference, of course, when writing to the Graid.

And today is June 19th, - the day the local colored people celebrate Emancipation Day. As Mr. Lincoln issued his Proclamation of Emancipation in the autumn and it went into effect on January 1st, I have always been a little puzzled as to this magical 19th of June. I have subsequently learned, however, that on this date its application was effected, or some such reason, - I can't recall precisely, which occasions the celebration. Already five different negroes have called on me to say howdy, - it is a beautiful day, but all the mulattoes will work madly today, just to proclaim to the world that they have nothing to celebrate, since they were not slaves.

1236

It seems to me that it has been a long time since Oklahoma wrote me, but a package of clothing came through yesterday, with a note, saying "for the starving Greeks," and I reckon another letter will be to hand shortly.

Eventually I shall try to put my Cane River notes, as dictated by Miss Ida, together, although that may not be soon, - what with the probably sag in health in the big house and the presence of grass in the cotton fields, which will keep my reader busy from dawn to dusk.

But they are sufficiently clear to enable me to fill in skips for I recall the details of our conversations quite clearly.

Today I shall probably devote to la Johnston in her photographing of Cane River houses, and I shall probably repeat the performance tomorrow. She certainly does beautiful work, and has a knack that is equally effective in getting other people to do about everything except snap the camera. But I continue to be mule-ish, and shall merely lend the charm of my presence, and as for a ten day tangle with her in Mississippi in September, - for her convenience and benefit, - exclusively, - then she might as well count me as out, for I shall have nothing at all to do with that project, and I shall neither subject myself or my friends to her whims and whimsies.

I have just received a message that she wants advise on some points regarding today's project, but she will have to await my convenience on that point, too, as I have a number of letters to sundry people which had better go out in today's post, and I shall accordingly attend to them before I undertake anything on her hook.

I am glad to learn that the Herald-Tribune business appears to have gone out after its initial flare-up. As for myself, I continue to hold steadfastly to the determination that contact is more important than anything else, or any of the possibilities stemming from correspondence, and accordingly you may count on me, as always, to keep the relation on its usual level, which is more precious to me than I can put down in words.....

1237

8621

June 20th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

June 19th turned out to be a fine holiday in this neighborhood. The sky was clear. A gentle breeze tempered the sun's heat. The negroes frolicking up and down the road, observed, as usual, that the mulattoes were all working madly to proclaim to the world they had nothing to celebrate about so far as emancipation was concerned.

On Sunday night, Miss Johnston had decided to photograph Melrose early in the day and thence on with her camera to do the balance of Cane River. At 11:30 a.m. she was still in her room, the smell of coffee issuing thence, indicating that she was making the most of the special brand of that staple and her own perculator which she had brought with her. At 12, we dined, with the Madam looking haggard, after the previous days doings of old man river. At 4 p.m. Miss Johnston announced she was going to trim a hat and then start out. We got under way at 5, observed a few houses, - Celine's, etc., and so were back at Melrose to snap the African House by 6:30, - which proved to be too late for the proper light. Accordingly the day passed without a lick of work being done save those who push typewriters and brooms, and neither in that or those two groups did too much, what with every moment being supposed as the magical one in which some major operation would start.

In the correspondence department came a letter, - at long last, - from Miss Ramsey. She expressed puzzlement that we had been unable to locate her during the flood period. I guess she must have thought she left us explicit directions as to how contact might be maintained. However, Miss Culver was as much in the dark as we were, so perhaps it wasn't so strange that we didn't know either. The letter states that a hurly-burly developement in her schedule, - a returning brother and veteran, - etc., has forced her to re-arrange things a bit, but that she will undertake to make Melrose before long. She seems to be quite enthusiastic about the matter, but between you and me, she had better hurry, or somebody else will be undertaking her stuff. I must write her this morning.

1238

A couple of items in regard to Miss Johnston may be in order, just to illustrate her type of personality. First off, regardless of "Arnett Kane's statement that "she can drink any six men under the table", I see nothing to indicate that she drinks anything stronger than coffee. With a strong will, she apparently has gone through life having her own way to a large extent, and yesterday at dinner she remarked that she has a positive mind, knows what she wants and how she wants it done, and only asks that others carry out her wishes. Obviously that is an example of conceit and utter disregard for others that probably has been a considerable stumbling block in her association with people who are of the opinion that there might possibly be more than the Johnston way of doing things. I imagine it might be quite funny to a third party observing her making suggestions, - tantamount to commands, - with me letting them bounce off my brain like water off a duck's back. Being so self-concentrated, she may have lived these 82 odd years without realizing what the trouble may be when she encounters a difficult personality like mine. She might learn before she gets done here, but I reckon if she has escaped the light thus far, she probably will avoid seeing it from here on out.

Perhaps the most amusing thing about her is another example of her imperviousness to Southern custom, even though she has photographed the South and must have lived for years with Southern people. That is to be found in one word: "Mrs." For, in speaking to or off the Madam, she always says: "Misses Cammie" instead of "Miss Cammie". Sometimes untutored southerners and hill-billies do the same thing, and frequently northerners commit the same outrage on custom, but it does seem strange that a person who has lived in the South as long as she must have would have caught on to the custom of saying "Miss" Cammie instead of "Mrs." Cammie.

One of these days, when La Johnston gets to sounding off about people not seeing what is right before their noses, I think I shall remark to her that almost anybody might make a "misses-take" so far as local customs go.

And I guess this is enough of local tom-foolery for the moment.

The June moon, so widely publicized by poets, is now waxing magnificently. Last night I again walked the Cote Joyeuse road, and Arenbourg was lovely.....

1239

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Only a brief memorandum this morning.

Caroline Dorman came yesterday evening and this morning I shall be busy in the gardens, getting some of the latest horticultural wrinkles straightened out. And interruption may intervene at any moment, and I shall accordingly have to attend to La Dorman, who will depart again for Briarwood sometime before noon, as I understand it. Her sister, "Ole Virginia", will be here with the car at almost any old time, although the dormons are famous for having not concept of time, so it may be night before they get going.

The enclosure indicates all is well up Oklahoma way. The \$25,000.00 fund sounds interesting. Perhaps something may come from that direction.

As regards the offspring of "The Black Swan", I have responded that I think the idea of the University Library writing for particulars a good one. After all, nothing could come via Melrose, since I have already, albeit, inadvertently, stuck out my neck in that direction, and I realize the possibility that the Coronado people are probably descendants, not of Elizabeth Greenfield, who had no heirs, but of Eliza Greenfield, the Black Swan herself. It will be nice if we can get some particulars through the "round-about" channel, - for I must say that to get to Natchez via Oklahoma and California, via Louisiana, is what might be styled "all around Robin Hood's barn".

La Johnston, determined to take the west bank house on Cane River, requiring the early morning light, actually got under full sail yesterday at 5 o'clock in the evening. Pat drove her to town to post an air mail letter at that hour, and they returned home in time for her to snap a picture of the African House. She now has decided to remain here

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until Sunday, - which is putting quite a strain, I think, on the high blood pressure, and I am only hoping that the lid doesn't fly off before that late date.

La Dormon's advent was all to the good. She can talk an ear off anyone, but it provides entertainment for the hostess, and diverts a mind that might otherwise, and frequently does manifest irritability. By the time the week end comes, - what with all that has transpired in the past 7 days, things ought to be pretty close to the boiling point.

It seems to me there were two or three things, mentioned in the enclosure I wanted to refer to, but cannot recall them at the moment. Oh, yes, the reference to the disagreeable Mr. Barnes of Philadelphia. It was merely to say that I recall he had experts assemble his collection of French Impressionist paintings when he was establishing his Museum. There were three people who worked separately and jointly in Paris on the purchase of those pictures, - Matisse, I think, although I am not sure, but I am sure of the other two, - your friend, Gertrude Stein and my friend, Alfred Maurer, son of old Louis of Currier and Ives fame.

I have written Mr. Pipes that I think it would be best to try to sell a group of the Clemence things, - illustrative of her flower things and her folk lore illustrations. After all, the value of the work is based not on their artistic merit, but rather upon the phenomenon that such an untrained and untutored person could manifest such a surprising gift for color and design without ever having seen a picture or received any instruction whatsoever in the medium she uses to express herself. In that category they certainly do rank high, and on that basis they should be offered for sale, I think. It seems rather surprising that somebody like old Rosenwald didn't establish a gallery for such examples of the race.

There are a dozen other things of which I would touch upon, but I shall have to let them slide for the moment. The day is so much better if one can have just a word, - even a mere glance, in the right direction, and my day will be sufficiently worthwhile for this little moment.....

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Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The enclosure is from Mary. In reading it, you will no doubt recall what so many humanitarians, including Eleanor Roosevelt, have remarked: - that poverty plays a big part in getting things out of joint.

As one person's viewpoint of what is going on in Natchez, I think this is particularly good, even though it stems from one whose circumstances give a slightly over shadowing of some of the doings and the reasons for those doings.

The returning veteran referred to, of course, is Pierce Butler, Jr., and I guess all the other characters are pretty evident.

It is so natural that one working so hard would fulminate at the financial and social set-up depriving her of the opportunity to do some of the things which are so worth while and for which she is well equipped to carry out. If one stretches the imagination a little, the picture somehow could be superimposed on almost any epoch wherein wealth is badly distributed and the powers that flow from wealth are in the hands of those who do less with it than those who do not possess it.

To keep the actual set up a little more perfectly in mind than this symposium does, it is well to remember that a person like Mrs. B., being possessed of a worthless husband and brother, the one a drunkard and the other both a drunkard and insane, must of necessity maintain a sense of balance by giving more importance to the social side of things than they are actually worth, - or would be worth, were there not the tremendous worries in her scale of life which demands an over abundance of cheer to bring the tares into balance.

Surely this enclosure is scarcely worth all this dissertation, and yet, because it is well written, and does reflect a soul that is worth while being tried by circumstances beyond her control, I send it along. Through its lines, you will probably the better appreciate subtle manifestations of why I say I cannot find myself in tune with the writer's personality at all times, and yet why I admire her for her honesty, albeit abrupt, and her genuine interest in the under privileged, - a quality all too rare in any time or place.

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Yesterday until 3 p.m., it was a beautiful day. La Johnston never did get away from her coffee pot, and not a picture was hit off. She is scheduled to depart on Sunday, leaving but two days to take Melrose houses and Cane River generally. She never will be able to do it.

Caroline "Mormon" remained for dinner, departing shortly thereafter. About 2 an old friend of the Madam's came by, - and later expressed her shock and depression at the evident deterioration of her old friend.

We had a good shower at 3, and a beautiful sunset to close the year's longest day. I skipped down to Lemence's about first dark, taking with me a summer dress, - yellow with small dots in it, - puffed or padded sleeves, etc., which you may remember. I also carried a little sweater for Mary Frances which had come from Oklahoma. There was some talk about a lampel, which one of the children had hoed up in the cotton patch. This strange fish is of the eel family and has four tiny legs, which are purely decorative, and of no use in walking. It is dark gray or black in color, and somehow always frightens the darkies, although it is quite harmless, being of the eel family, although they all have a story about a man who died from its bite. One thing about it is the fact that it has no teeth, so I guess it couldn't bite much.

Before I left, Lemence had to try on the dress and declared it fitted her perfectly. From where I sat, it seemed to do just that, and she, of course, was enchanted. So there's your good deed and another star twinkles in your crown.

Returning home, the big old moon was wading through equally big old clouds, and I found a little friend awaiting me, saying he was going to the barber's across the river by boat, and would I like to ride. I would. And I did. And it was all very pleasant, even though the barber didn't do any hair cutting, for all that. But on the smooth surface of the river, a marvelous sky pattern spread ever so far, the moon, the clouds and an occasional star shimmering in between, and my thoughts traveled far, both in miles and in time, and I thought how nice it is going to be when there are other moons to be drunk in, as a dusky gondolier silently paddles his skiff and his passengers along the same surface.

A letter from the servant, reporting a safe trip back to New Orleans, came to hand in yesterday's mail. It seems the master has reformed, is eating well, and everything is just as dandy. - all of which, with a nickle, would secure one a round of coffee.

1243

Memorandum to Clipping Service: no record of anything I saw, but I saw a report on the June 25th, 1945. Somehow the day opened early, and what with one thing and another, - including the fact that the post man was a couple of hours early, I never did get to my own correspondence, what with several items I had to run off for the Madam.

The latter's health continues to sag gradually, and possibly not seriously, but withal painfully. She appears to have some kind of rheumatism that flies around from one muscle to another on succeeding days, and in consequence, she does very little, save to grace her sofa. Yesterday she did not go down stairs at all. and Payne decided that something ought to be done, and taking my advice, recommended North Carolina, - Pennland, where she has a room in that colony, where lots of people are engaged in weaving and other folk efforts which she likes so much. But he, physician recommended that she remain here and that her nurse of last spring, Miss Pickle, be brought back to nurse her for a little while, to give her hot pads for her rheumatism, etc.

In my opinion, that is merely patching up and staving off something for later, and obviously she will not improve until she gets out of here and someplace where it is cooler and where an appetite may be developed and proper food prepared to meet an impulse for food when it does arise. But she will not subscribe to such an idea, - not until she gets so worn out, she can't do anything about it, and so we shall go along, patching up and patching up, and getting no where fast. It is my understanding that Miss Pickle is on a confinement case at the moment, but will come to Melrose when that job is finished. In the mean time we shall dwindle along, gradually getting weaker and weaker, with more time and energy required to begin the rebuilding once more, when it is eventually undertaken. I am passing along a statement of health hereabouts to Norman, in order that Mr. Pipes may relay it to Miss Eli, hoping that the news may stave off her current visit, on her way home to Baton Rouge. Miss Eli is a swell person, but inclines to take what she sees for actuality, and being guileless herself, is inclined to spill beans without ever realizing she is doing so. There would be no need, for example, to remark that Mr. Pipes and I may possibly undertake to do some joint work at Arenbourg,

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but that would be a perfect example of how she might drop a remark, - thinking nothing or understanding nothing of the curious, mental, twists, - and so induce a great deal of mental distress in advance of a situation, which, if actually accomplished, would cause but slight ripples, whereas if spilled in advance, might occasion considerable waves. I certainly hope she passes by this area on her way, - but pass by without stopping.

I continue to labor on the Rev. Chase's synopsis, which I find rather difficult to do, - it is such an important thing, and yet so curious and outlandish, that it is scarcely possible to break it down in a fashion that anyone unacquainted with the facts, would believe. But it is shaping up slowly, and I am hoping to get it off this week.

I spent a perfectly delightful day on Little River on Sunday. Starting out early, - on a horse that was much too frisky, I covered a lot of ground fast. I stopped off to see my old friend, Archellius, and together we covered a lot of ground, all the way from the Bible to the wisdom of raising more corn for hogs and chickens. Stopping at another cabin on the other bank of Little River, we did quite a symposium on turtles, one of the children having just brought in a "couwan", - I have no idea how the thing is actually spelled. It seems to be a turtle with five ridges down its back, looking quite ferocious, but making excellent soup, they tell me. And so on to dinner with Ida and Charles, and back here by 4 p.m., - withal hot and tired. Pat was just starting to drive la Johnston down to Cloutierville for supper. A verbal invitation had been left for me, but of course, as always, I declined.

The Madam asked me to find the time Ployanne, which la belle Johnston had taken to her room. I wish you could see her bedroom and the adjoining bath, - there is everything on earth in it, and as the darkies would say, of such a mix up: "A cow couldn't find its own calf in there." Most striking, and puzzling, is the fact that she has three large old fashioned wash-bowls, - porcelaine ones, in the bath room, filled to overflowing with ivy, and the bath tub is plumb full of the same plant. With ivy growing by the mile in the gardens, - tons of it, why she should fill up the bath tub, - and especially in this hot weather, with it, I cannot imagine. I told the Madam if I could only find an alligator about 2 or 3 feet long, I would put in the tub with the ivy, and give the old girl a start. She threatens to take off for New Orleans on Wednesday, but she never will. I am sure. But she had better start before long because Pat, who has been delegated to drive her, is fed up on her dictatorial and fuss-pot methods and manners, and if she doesn't watch out, she will be losing Pat for an uncertain chauffeur, - which probably wouldn't matter to her, just so long as she could put somebody through. She took no pictures at all, either on Saturday or Sunday, - which, also, is none of my business... I'll do better at my next sitting, and in the mean time apologize for this nondescript affair.....

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June 26th, 1945.

Memorandum to "Lipping Service"

So Waldi is dead and will never romp on the terrace of Arenbourg. Well, physically, yes, but spiritually No. For the good and the evil that things living set in motion go right on functioning down through the years, and even though the doer may depart from the visible scene, he really doesn't die until all the influences he has set in motion have ceased to operate. Animals, and especially pet, somehow typify human qualities, and from what you have told me of Waldi, gentleness, affection and fidelity were his cardinal virtues. Witnessing these virtues in animals, as we do, and day after day, these qualities somehow take on a deeper significance for us as we see them glow more brightly. Gradually those examples they set for us somehow become the more strongly impressed on our own personality, so that when those living objects which we have learned to admire and love move on to a greater sphere beyond our human sight, they leave with us those positive attributes they have so constantly demonstrated, and we in turn are the better for having known and loved them well. Waldi, of course, is dead, and will never romp on the terrace of Arenbourg. But in a way, Waldi will always live, throwing into starker relief those negative virtues, possessed by others less fine than himself, and making us cling the stronger to those simple and fundamental virtues which, in the long run, are the only basic forces that make life worth while. Having lived with one who so tenderly sensed and appreciated his gifts of friendship and fidelity, Waldi will always exert his influence from day to day as one goes through the joys and sorrows of life, and while awaiting one's realization of a measure of happiness on "God's half-acre", greater strength will well up to enable one to forebear until that dream is realized. And once realized, Waldi's spirit will still shine through the uncertain mists of today as they fade before a brighter tomorrow, and then, in all good time, Waldi's spirit will in truth romp gaily on the terrace of Arenbourg, and Arenbourg will be the better place because of the nobility of his spirit which will find happiness and contentment there, - brought back to spiritual animation by one in whom he could trust so implicitly to reflect and transpose it to the place where God intended him, - physically or spiritually, to relax in the satisfaction that at last he has found peace and home.

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In yesterday's post came your report, together with the package of which you spoke. May I say that I think you and the girl friend are to be congratulated upon your generosity and upon your decision to practice charity where we know it will do so much by way of clothing the needy.

I have laid the things out neatly on a big old bed in my house, and it has been good for the heart to think of how many people are going to benefit and be made glad by your joint manifestations of kindness.

Fugabon's little Helen was crying yesterday morning on the store gallery, when I took the mail to the post office. The first Sunday in each month there is service at St. Mary's on the Payon, back on Little River. Helen had worn her Sunday dress to the store and had torn it in climbing through a barbed wire fence, and she would have no nice dress for Sunday. And then came your package, and this evening I shall go by Fugabon's house, and Helen shall have a much prettier dress than she had before. And she will grin and show her row of magnificent white teeth, and the child's heart will be glad when she learns of her friends way off yonder, and she will finally go to sleep, dreaming of the Sunday after next and how nice her new dress is going to look. And Clemence and her needle will come in for her share, and she will fashion something smart for Mary Frances. And there will be a garment for Clemence's daughter, Jackie, who lives across the way from her, and there will be something, too, for Jackie's little daughter, Willie, whom, for no reason on earth, I always call "Minnie May." And Minnie May will be a full of glee as Mary Frances, and she will giggle and twist and turn about in her embarrassment, as she always does when her self-consciousness gets the better of her, which is usually the case when I see her. I suspect that for the age of 7 or 8, she probably manifest more impulses than most children of a like number of years, and in her one finds a developed, curious kind of satisfaction in being near people to whom she likes than could ever be expressed in the limited range of her vocal expression. Once, when I carried some paints to Clemence and some brushes to Mary Frances, Minnie Mae was with them, and I found myself mortified that I had nothing by way of a lanyard for Minnie May, who looked quite gay, thanks to an attractive hair-do, her kinky knobs of hair, embellished at one point by a piece of white rayon, somehow woven into the perruque. Distressed that I had no little nothing to give her, I tried to compensate by admiring her hair do most lavishly. Apparently my efforts were more successful than wise for now, whenever she seems me heading down the road, she rushes about, so Clemence says, and grabs up any old something to attach to her curls. and if I pause for a moment

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to sit and chat with her grandmother, "Minnie May" cautiously but with evident determination to please, gradually approaches my chair, not unlike the method of amulation of a crab, and ends up by weaving around and about the legs of the chair just like old Grandpa does when I am sitting at my breakfast and he thinks there is going to be a piece of bacon for him.

It will be interesting to learn what happens to the blue satin garment. Somehow I have a feeling it will take on something symbolic like The Cherry Cape. No one on earth can possibly imagine how one fertile brain will contrive to get the most out of it. Perhaps it will serve as a slip, possibly as a drape for the shoulders with a matching remanent to be fashioned artistically about the head. But speculation is obviously out of order, since no one will be able to figure it out in advance. I shall never breath such a thing, but I wish it might be fashioned into a suit for one of Clemence's little grandsons, for a Cnae River Blue Boy ought really to be something.

Picture for yourself, - you and the girl friend, how much good you have done by this thoughtfulness on your part. For not only have you fed the imagination with banquets of menal joy, but at the same time, the results of all this pleasure will provide a flock of people with raiment, and your blessings will be doubled or trebled for those who receive and we three shall have the fun of observing to what good and practical uses these items will be put.

Time runs out, for I must up and away early t is morning, what with la belle Johnston determined to finish taking a couple of pictures today, - prior to her departure for New Orleans on the morrow. I feel positive that she will not get around to leave before the end of the week, but the effect on today's program is just the same, and I must accompany her on her morning's tour, - I really can't believe she is up, but so say the servants, - for if I do not go along with her and hold her down, she will be turning the cabins of some of my friends up side down and inside out, - just as she tried to get me to cut all the bananas along my front gallery, just to suit her momentary whim, - and somebody has to put his foot down in behalf of these simple folk in whose domestic arrangemtn a la bag might otherwise raise Hell.....

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June 27th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The Uncle Remus came to hand in yesterday's post, together with the letter, both of which gave the Madam much satisfaction. She may respond shortly in her own hand, although she hasn't written any letters, I think, in two or three weeks, and therefore if none should appear, you will understand that she is nursing her rheumatism, and will probably not undertake correspondence until after her nurse, Miss Pickle, has come by for a number of days to give her some kind of electric treatments.

The clipping having to do with contemporary aspects of the cotton industry was a noble piece of work, and I know that J. H. is going to enjoy reading it, too. It would seem as though cotton were about on its way out as the South's great staple, what with rayons so heavily financed and replacing cotton at almost every turn. Only the absorbant quality of cotton has enabled it to keep even a toe hold in the clothing industry, and it is to be hoped that that fact, plus some other developments paralleling the synthetic fabrics, may eventually save the industry. Conservative thinkers in these parts, however, have a feeling that within another decade or two, cattle will probably replace cotton as the South's major industry, should synthetics continue to make the advances it has mustered during the past ten or fifteen years.

I haven't heard much about it, but I believe there is a great trend in these parts toward forestry, too, and that with the cattle, may replace a lot of the cotton effort. Of course the great problem of the South is to keep things from growing rather than to get them to growing, as in the North. Thanks to the excessive heat and humidity in these parts, trees, - and all vegetable life, - grow like Jack's famous bean stalk, and with the expected continuation of demands for lumber, - and for pulp, in the years following the war, it is considered a far sighted investment by some to being planting trees now for subsequent cutting ten to twenty years hence.

I believe one of the big demands for lumber and pulp in the post war years will be from the manufacturers of pre-fabricated houses. Kaiser, the ship builder, already has a vast plant going in Denver, I believe, and it is said that other units

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are being opened in various sections of the country.

I think it is possible to make a down payment of \$125.00 on delivery of these houses, and \$25.00 monthly hence forth until paid for, and what with the housing situation as it is, a whole flock of people, probably would grab at such a possibility, and at houses of more spacious and elaborate design.

Seldom is a country ever adequately housed, I suppose, and if the units to be turned out for contemporary use should prove to be good, I suppose there would be no end to the demand. I believe it is said that Leonardo da Vinci advocated pre fabricated houses in his time. It is odd that we have had to wait so long for them.

On the local front, it is my understanding that la belle Johnston is scheduled to take off this morning, with Pat as her driver. She never did get around to take any pictures, save those of a few houses in the gardens of Melrose. I think the heat finally got the old girl, and I must say I can't blame her, what with her 82 years, for not having much energy to get going early enough in the day to do much.

The more I see of her, the more sorry I feel for her. I think she is inclined to be lonely, and anxious for human companionship. But that hope she is not likely to realize, and for myself, I have contributed nothing toward that end, what with the inordinate demands she seems impelled to make upon any and everyone who comes within calling distance. I am wondering if loneliness may not be one the major reasons for her change of residence from Washington, D. C., where she has just sold her house, to New Orleans where she has just purchased one. After all, an old woman of 82 must have some good reason for pulling up stakes at such a late date, and I am inclined to think she has at long last given up all hope of ever having intimate friends in Washington and clutches fervently toward the Crescent City where people don't know her quite so well as yet.

It's really hilarious how white folks and colored automatons really start smiling in the opposite direction whenever she heaves into sight. For a long time I have felt sorry for ghosts, who are probably dying for human companionship, and are always being rebuffed from by everyone they encounter. And so la Johnston, although weighing a couple of hundred pounds, is something of a ghost, - so far as human reactions to her are concerned, and even though she may be departing at this moment, I shall make no effort to hunt her up and say Au revoir. She says she is returning in October to "do" Cane Riger. Well, there is no need to rush into it, is all I can say to her.....

Pat, like the rest of creation, appears in her mind to be her lackey, I guess. I thought Pat would "bust" with fury, and I should have done the same in sympathy, had I not found the old girl making such a silly spectacle of herself.

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June 28th, 1945.
Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Well, at long last, la belle Johnston is gone, - although I began to have misgivings that such a statement could ever be made.

On Tuesday night she asked the cook, who usually arrived about 6 a.m., to come earlier on Wednesday, in order that she might have her breakfast and be gone on the long hot trip to New Orleans before the sun got too high.

At 5:40, Pat got up, being scheduled to drive the lady. When I went to the big house at 10 a.m., thinking I might find her gone, la bag was still trailing about in her dressing gown. It seems she was awaiting certain physical actions, in response to some medicine she had taken the day before.

By eleven, this phenomenon had been accomplished, and then the lady decided to pick herself an enormous bouquet, to carry with her to New Orleans, where she is scheduled to arrive today. She got the bouquet alright, and it took her an hour to do it, but as she put it in the back of the car with not moisture about the stems, - and what with the thermometer soaring into the upper 90's, I can persuade myself that the bouquet will amount to much if at all when she ever gets to the Crescent City.

Off had, I should say she travels with about 20 or 30 pieces of luggage, - non-descript stuff. - at had packed everything very nicely, but when she reached the car, - without even looking at it, she said quite tartly: "Well, now the first thing you can do, is take every thing out of the car, and pack it under my supervision."

Pat, like the rest of creation, appears in her mind to be her lackey, I guess. I thought Pat would "bust" with fury, and I should have done the same in sympathy, had I not found the old girl making such a silly spectacle of herself.

The fact of the matter is that once she may have been good, but she is played out as a photographer and has lost, - if she ever had, all consideration for people, and for once in my life I find myself saying - don't care how she pans out and so far as she is concerned, if I never see her again, it will be plenty soon.

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I mentioned Mary Ellen Chase's volume, *The Bible and The Common Reader* once before, I believe. On Sunday Charles read to me from the chapter on the compilation of the King James version of that book. I found the account of it to be very interesting, and should you chance across the Chase book in the library, I think you will enjoy reading that section, - which, I think, is rather toward the front of the book. I don't know its precise title, but it can readily enough be found, I think.

There was one thing that impressed me by its absence; however, and that was any particular reference to King James himself, so far as having anything more to do with the version of the Bible bearing his name than to accept the suggestion that a standard Bible be compiled.

Somewhere vaguely in the recesses of my mind, it seems to me I recall once having heard it said that he had a somewhat active part in the proceedings, but I don't find any mention of this fact in the Chase book, and my mind may be playing tricks on me, or some such.

You will recall that King James, son of Mary, Queen of Scots, was made heir to the English throne by Elizabeth on the latter's death, - always a curious business, it seemed to me, since she had beheaded James' mother. I think James was dubbed "the wisest fool in Europe" during his life time, having always manifested greater learning than power to apply to life what funds of knowledge were accumulated in his brain. But thanks to the fact that the standard Bible was brought out during his reign, his name is probably pronounced more often by English speaking peoples than any other English monarch, although not a hundredth of the hearers of his name, when used in connection with his version of the Bible ever think of the individual when the King James version is mentioned.

What with the warm warm weather, the cotton is climbing so high, - perhaps a foot and a half now, that this will be about the final week the "ladies" will be able to hoe. For the most part, the staple will be sufficiently high to drown out the grass, and where ever the grass is in advance of the cotton, that cotton will just have to make out as best it can. Last year the crop was too great to be gathered in its entirety, and so, if the grass gets ahead of it in places this year, it is quite possible that there will still be more than enough to be gathered before Christmas, by which time everyone gets tired of picking it.

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As soon as the hoeing ceases, - "laying by the crop", as it is called, the gathering of hay will be the next thing on the docket, - and nobody likes that job much, for it is rather heavy work, and inclined to be dusty, and of course the dust clinging to the heavily perspiring forms of the workers makes the job doubly exasperating or is it irksome?

Well, anyway, haying in the South is something strikingly different from haying in other zones. For in other localities, one must await a drying of the hay, - curing, I believe they call it, before it is hauled to the barn or baled. But in this region, where the sun is so hot, the hay can be cut and hauled to the baling machine in a one, two, three fasion, without ever having to wait for it to cure. In other localities, too, there is always a diversification of labor in haying, too, since after mowing it down, and after it is cured, there is the raking, the loading on to wagons, hauling it to the barn, etc., etc., thereby giving the workers some relaxation in the several tasks employed in effecting the harvest, - plus a time lag and rest spell, as one process waits upon another, and the fodder is transported from field to barn, - where eventually, and usually weeks later, the baling is done.

But here the whole job is carried out from dawn to dusk, - mowing, raking, baling and hauling, all within the span of a single day. The baling apparatus is set up in the center of the field, and as the mowing machine starts out, it is followed by the rakes, and the stuff is immediately put into the thrasher, or whatever they call the baling machine, and the bales are bumped out of the press and into a truck that hauls them immediately to where ever they are going to be stored or sold.

I don't wonder the laborers don't look with too much enthusiasm upon the advent of haying, for it is a hot, disagreeable job at best, and one that just about floors most people, if any attempt is made to keep up with the machine that invariably sets the pace.

I am suddenly reminded of what someone once said about the fashion in which Caroline Ormon once took up valuable time for a high official, who, after an interview, remarked, relative to Miss Ormon's carryings on: "I never knew before that anyone could talk for two straight hours on a mere violet!" - and just why I should take up your time by such a dull business on hay making is beyond me.

And what with so many things having transpired in these parts of late, I now can't recall if I mentioned Hastings House to you of late. I shall run the risk of repetition by remarking

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that from old man river + recently learned that his assistant of P. days, one "ddie" ryer, is currently with Walter Frase, which was something of a surprise to me, and not calculated to fill me with too much satisfaction. I am sure I have passed this news along to R. Pipes and have pointed out to him that while Mr. ryer and I were always quite courteous to each other, ours were types of mind that were not especially sympathetic. I had always thought of his as shimmering like a tin can shines, - of a quality more resembling the sun on aluminum than a highly polished surface of a more precious metal. I have a feeling, too, that the Old Louisiana Scrapbook would represent a type of book that would neither appeal to him nor perhaps come within his realm of appreciation, although I may do the man an injustice.

On two or three occasions during the past several years, he has written me to ask a minor favor, and inevitably I have responded promptly and acquiesced. But never has there followed an acknowledgement, and never would I hear again until some other minor request was in the making. As an example, I cite the fact that he once asked me for particulars about hotel accommodations in Natchez, the liquor status of a wet town in a dry state, and would I be in Natchez at a certain time, and would I arrange a couple of parties, etc. In the latter instance, I recall, I responded promptly, acknowledge the tentative date he mentioned as to the time of his probable arrival, and asked him to confirm the exact week-end, so that I might stir up a couple of dinner parties for him at the homes of friends. Obviously this was done as much for his associate in the literary field at that time as for him, but it constituted nothing exceptional, although I thought it might make it possible for him to enjoy his initial visit the more. I guess that may have been three or four years ago, but up to now I haven't heard boo from him, which somehow illustrates as much as anything about where he stands in my estimation, and why I am not especially gratified to learn that he has some sort of a key post at the moment in Hastings.

You will forgive such a dull communication, Hope. I guess the hot weather must have seeped into this keyboard, even as it has into my mental processes. I shall try to do better on the morrow.....

1254

June 29th, 1945.

Memorandum to "Lipping Service:

Although it arrived yesterday, seemingly it will arrive in today's post, - a letter from Caroline Ramsey, proposing a visit with a friend, on Tuesday, July 3rd.

As soon as the mail arrives this morning, we shall consider the matter, and advise her by telegram, as she request confirmation or rejection by 6 p.m. today, prior to her departure from Marshall, Texas to New Orleans. I think the answer will be No. In the first place, the Madam is too tired, and in the second place, a nurse is scheduled to arrive on Monday. But we shall see.

If Caroline, by some strange twist, should come at this time, I think I shall suggest that she do some pictures and a text on a Mississippi subject. As the idea is mine, and the places involved are known not at all to her, it is possible that we could make some sort of an arrangement for our mutual advantage.

Here is the idea: - It was in the "Winter of 1939, I think, that the last and probably only article on "atchez appeared in The Saturday Evening Post. What with six years having elapsed and the resumption of Pilgrimages in the offing, it seems as though another article might be in order. The former article featured Dunleith, Longwood and some of the other rather larger houses. My title, - although better phrased, would incorporate this angle:

FORGOTTEN LITTLE MANSION OF OLD NATCHEZ

What do you think about the appeal of such an article, - better phrased, of course, - and should the adjective be more along the line of "Hidden" than "Forgotten", and have you any thought as to a really striking title?

The point of the article would be that while the big showy mansions of "atchez have had the burden of publicity, in reality there are a flock of smaller mansions, hidden away in the shadow of the more pretentious places that have even greater claim to general interest, being richer in architectural virtues, more romantic in historic lore and more precious than the super-colossal late mansions because they stand for the character of the country and not the mere ostentatious and superficial trapping of the bigger, later places.

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The ideas would be furthered by a flock of examples in the smaller house bracket: - Sweet Auburn, the home of Dr. Monette, about which quite a round could be done in reference to his introduction of the "quarantine theory, his Hiss. of the Miss. Valley, etc; Meade Villa would follow, about which the Aaron Burr business could be brought in, - what with Meade Villa having been the home of old "athaniel" are, who arrested Burr, and my friend, B. L. C. Walles thrown in for good measure; then there would be Foster's Mound, to which the story of the Prince of Jallon could be attached, albeit, dragged in by the heels a bit; Cherokee would be included, too, of course, for The Black Swan, - Cherokee not having been used in the 1939 article in The Post; and Mistletoe, for no particular historical interest, save the doings of Islands in Spanish Days; and "The Bucket of Blood" - the tumbling down town house of Andrew Marschalk; and Barling Hill, the home of old Benjamin Chase, etc., etc.

It seems to me that with elegant pictures, such an article might be worked up into something, and I think I shall consult the lady on the point. It is possible that she would prefer to do whatever she does by herself, and I am not sure she goes in much for houses. But should the thought hold some interest for her, I think we might be able to work out something, yes, no?

And so, if she does not come on Tuesday, I shall write her a letter, scouting the idea anyway, withholding the particulars, but indicating the chance for some joint labors in the Natchez area, and then, as soon as I am done with the dentist, I might be able to undertake something to make Arenbourg seem a little nearer.

Of the half dozen places mentioned above, but two of them have ever been photographed, I think, - Cherokee and Mistletoe. If we could get the others on to films, plus half a hundred others, it is possible that they might come in handy eventually for use in other articles and possibly a book which I should like to do sometime, called The Lost Plantations, which seems to be a good title, I think.

I tossed off the above places at random, but as I think of it further, I suppose a whole flock of other places would come to mind, - places that have never been done, such as Ingleside, the home of Dr. Affleck, Hunter's Hall of the Bingamans, and so on. Then in the Port Gibson, or rather the Rodney area, there is the tottering old home of the Wades, later known as the Hammer place, because it became the plantation home of the illegitimate daughter of Joseph "avis, brother of Jefferson "avis, and no and on indefinitely.

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You will forgive me, I trust, for rattling along at such a great rate, but the idea to convert all this accumulation into something for Arenbourg, through an association with la Ramsey, gives me a spark of enthusiasm, in spite of the intense humidity, and it is always more fun to discuss these matters with someone who knows what I am talking about than it is to mull them over with Grandpa who, at best, appears to pay very slight attention to it.

Well, I seem to be off as much on a tangent today in the department of old houses as I was yesterday in the haying business, and I shall save you the boredom of further flights into exhaustion by braking off about here.

"ith la belle Johnston out of the picture, temporarily at least - the Madam says she thinks she has fallen a victim to old age, and is about done for and that we shall never see her again, - it is fruitful to think of possibilities of doing some things with another photographer, - and most certainly I shall never impose upon people I know in Natchez by dragging la Johnston around in that neighborhood. But, as I tap these lines, another thought does occur to me, - although I promised to get away from the subject, - and that is a pictorial account for Life or for The Saturday Evening Post of The Mississippi Ghost Towns, - which old Udera threatened to do for Harper's Bazaar but failed to produce, unless it was her intention to carry out the ghost idea by dishing up a mess that was made of the same substance ghosts are reported to embrace.

Well, anyway, here are a flock of ideas, and in a way I am hoping that I may contact la Ramsey shortly, and that I may strike up some sort of tinder that will eventually produce the withal to make Arenbourg grow and Meade Villa take on form.....

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June 30th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To hand your most estimable report, and thanks a million
for all the pleasures it afforded.

May I congratulate you on all the treasures you ran across
in your 4th Avenue excursion. I think it is so nice to think
of these as foundation files for Arenbourg, and the search for and
the acquisition of such items somehow take on an added zest when
one has a particular place in mind for their eventual delectation.
It is somehow like buying a fine wine at R. H. Macy's, for there
is not only the fun of searching out precisely what is wanted,
or something, the content of which isn't quite sure in the mind, but
behind the whole transaction is the enormous back drop of pleasures
to be anticipated, when one looks forward in the mind to the
setting and the circumstance of sampling this or that vintage.

Now and then I find myself hauling through one mass of
papers or another, looking for nothing in particular, but somehow
getting an enormous satisfaction in just pulling through this
treasure or that, thinking the while of the fun it is going to
be when we get the Arenbourg library laid out and we can turn to
this item or that, and not only get the pleasure of finding it
to hand, but the relish of absorbing it during some long summer's
evening on the terrace or beside a crackling fire some damp winter's
night.

I must congratulate you on your Baedeker finds, and it must
be the book sellers haven't yet anticipated the value that these
items should eventually take on, as historical records of what
was once, but has now slipped into a vanished world. What a
treasure, were one to discover some old role of papyrus, -
an Ancient guide to some flourishing civilization such as Greece or
Egypt or Babylon, and what a treasure house of particulars it would
cover in a world where destruction has so effectively obliterated
so many precious things.

And the old magazines that you found sound grand. I think
it is loads of fun just to turn through them, and then there is the
added pleasure of finding here and there something that is precisely
along the line one is interested. And for those who would
re-capture the passing scene, - on any given subject, always
finds such valuable aids and parcels in publications of this type.

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In spite of yesterday's rather excessive heat, I made a couple of rounds to various girl friends, and thanks to your good offices, a number of hearts were the happier before sunset, thanks to the gifts coming their way.

It was coincidental that thoughts of "the starving Greeks" should have operated at the same time, both from New York State and Oklahoma, but the Oklahoma stuff was primarily for gentlemen, and so the ladies fared not at all, - save for one small sport sweater.

I called on Sis Randolph first, - she is Fugabon's mama, and grandma of my reader, - so you might omit reference to her. She showed her the flowered dress, the one with the red decoration down the front, - short sleeves, etc., and asked her if she thought she could do something for Helen with it. She thought it possible, and yet it was of such a nice size, she thought maybe she could do something for herself with it. That was alright with me, since there was another item for Helen that would suit her. To quote Sis directly:

"My daughter, up Bermuda way, has gwine lookin' for to find a baby right soon, so if I kin make it up yonder when she's done found it, then I has a fine dress that I's might proud of to wear." And so the flowered dress will make her heart glad, and she will be the prouder, Sis will, when she finds herself decked out in something new as she passes by to see her new grandchild. In passing, I would remark that in this region neither people have babies nor do animals or birds. Instead, they always "find" them.

Well, after disposing of that material in your behalf, I went down to see Clemence, and found her hoeing in her garden. The day was so hot I was impressed by the feeling of coolness she exuded. Perhaps it was because she was barefoot, and maybe that kept the temperature down so far as she was concerned.

It would have given your heart much pleasure if you could have seen her run through the several items and to hear her remark on how the things could be made use of. For one thing, the nightgowns will be reserved for such a time as she may go to visit her sister in Beaumont, - and so on. She was so filled with appreciation that she spoke out quite simply, but with much feeling:

"It jus' seem like if I seed them ladies what sent these here things to me, a-comin' down the road, I'd just have to run out and throw my arms 'round them and kiss 'em!" - which is a very ver strong statement for a person of color to make, especially in these parts.

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And so you will realize, - you all, - that your charity has clothed the needy and at the same time brought joy to their hearts, and if such a dual accomplishment can be attained in a single stroke, I honestly think you both are to be congratulated.

A telegram went forward to Caroline Ramsey on Friday morning, saying that we should be delighted to see her and her friend on Tuesday, July 3rd, and so, during the impending week, we ought to get a lot of work done, - pictures taken and data whipped up for a Cane River article.

I shall give her the latter, but shall precede my verbal gift, - of facts, theories, etc., etc., with a proposition regarding the Forgotten Little Mansions, of Rodney and of Woodville, - as touched upon in my letter of yesterday.

I think I shall present it on the theory that with what I know of the places to be photographed, - their locality and their stories, - she can scoop up enough within a few days to turn out more articles in a twinkling than were she able to undertake it by herself in months, - or years. This is quite true, and therefore, I am hoping she will feel that even though she divide the profits of such a venture, she will still be making more than she would, were she to figure in the time required, were she to undertake such a job alone.

In the mean time, we shall be busy as bees, taking everything up and down Cane River, and most particularly Clemence, of course, and a number of other local friends.

And so July 4th, will be busy in these parts, but not so much in celebrating as in recording contemporary personalities and places. There are other points I would touch upon, but I shall have to let (have to let) them go for this sitting.

I do hope your little holiday may be pleasureable, and I shall most certainly appreciate your kindness in advising me in regard to your own plans for a vacation. Wouldn't it be grand if the travel situation weren't so excessive and you could make a little tour around a bend or two of Cane River. Well, Patience will see that come true, too, and in the mean time, some rest and relaxation is much more to the point, in order that we may build the sounder for the morrow.....

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July 2nd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

A new week, - following a quiet week end, - and it
ought to be fairly busy, - and not without some productive
features, I am hoping.

Sunday I was up fairly nearly, walked a little along the
river until pretty well soaked by a very heavy dew, and then
encountered my friend, Mr. Breux, who transported me across
the river to Jack's house, to get my hair cut. As we
approached the house, we could hear the sound of a saw. I
remarked to Mr. Breux that I hoped the barber's clippers had
not failed him, and that in consequence, he had been forced to
lay hold of a saw in their stead.

But my fears proved groundless. The clippers still
functioned alright. Jack had merely killed an 800 pound
beef, and was in the act of cutting it up before turning to
his usual adjustment of perruques on the Sabbath morn.

The balance of the day I spent at home, for the most
part engaged in making notations to be discussed with Miss
Ramsey when she arrives tomorrow, - Little Mansions, Rodney, etc.

For a rarity, the Madam and I were alone all day. I passed by
the house three or four times, and found her in rather gay
spirits most of the time, - in spite of the somewhat depressing
book she was reading, - the Woolcott biography by Chase.
One very interesting point during our little contacts was
the fact that she went into detail at one of these sittings,
recounting the circumstances of the Woolcott visit at Melrose.
I threw in a few side-lights, relative to one circumstance or
another, but she never did grasp that I had been among those
present, and so continued to impart things he had said at
supper, etc., etc. This is not a new manifestation of a somewhat
striking lapse of memory, but it may be noted more frequently
during the past year.

On Sunday evening at 5:30, Pat returned from driving la
Johnston to New Orleans. I chatted with him but a moment, but
shall have more particulars later today, I expect. He said

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he saw Lyle at the Hotel, and that he was still furious at la bag for having jockeyed him into coming up here and then failed to return when he was forced to do so, and that he was going to expect her to pay the seventy-five dollar ambulance bill.

Spending about \$300.00 for week end parties on liquor alone, and about \$20.00 daily on the same commodity, it is strange that he would let this mere \$75.00 item so stick in his crop. That seems to be the situation, however, as Pierre might remark, and we shall see what will turn up next. Having denounced little Miss Alberta for having sent him to the hospital last autumn, and now denouncing la Johnston for her move, he will soon be bereft of the friendship of maiden ladies, if he doesn't slow up! I laugh every time I think of this latest jaunt into the country, however, for I think it was a case of two wilful people trying to put something over, each on the other, and they both came out the little end of the horn, and their friendship altogether battered. According to him, she promised to assume all expenses of the trip, if he would accompany her to point out the right places to be photographed and introduce her to the right people. She paid her own expenses he says, and nothing more. On her side, she says she engineered the trip primarily to benefit him, - to get him into the open country, with the premises to take some pictures which he wanted for his own use. I can't imagine either of them doing anything, save for more or less selfish ends, and to think that they both got so beautifully "done", makes the whole thing perfect.

A letter from "obina" speaks of having been to Cliff Byrd's to dinner, here she saw "some perfectly lovely plans he is making for a house to be put in a particular location". Thus guardedly, and without the Madam suspecting what it is about, Miss "enholme" indicates that Mr. Byrd is working on prospective layouts for Arenbourg. He visited the place when he was here a month ago, and I let him have the book on la maison de la reine, and that, added together, sums up what the quote refers to. Surely specifications for Arenbourg seems a little premature at the moment, but it will be nice to have them as an inspiration when things get to turning a bit. And surely the star of hope, which is Arenbourg, glows the brighter as we keep our eyes trained on it.....

if giving more thought to the possibility of a visit to Arenbourg, I am sure that I shall be able to find a way to get there.

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to contain a full and complete record of the life of the late Mrs. J. B. Mignon, who died on July 3rd, 1945. Her will, however, directed that the record be placed in the hands of the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, for reference only. Permission to publish must be requested. WARNING: MOST MANUSCRIPTS ARE PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT.

Memorandum to Clipping Service: To hand your splendid report, and so many interesting points, that I scarcely know where to begin to make my response.

But that is an overstatement, since it is frankly true that what interested me most was the possibility of an October outing. Travel, - and other circumstances permitting, let Arenbourg be the point to strive toward. Everyone here would be enchanted. And from your point of view, there would be the dividend of a clearer picture in mind of the layout which Time holds as promise for the morrow. "The shape of things to come" would perhaps be a little nearer realization, it might seem, if opportunity afforded the possibility of closer acquaintance with the circumstances. I do not further urge this long jaunt, for I realize how many circumstances may intervene to make it seem impracticable at the moment, - but in the case things should turn so as to make a little sojourn in these parts, then please be assured that such a visit would delight everyone, and to a degree far beyond my ability to express that emotion. Thus said, I shall refer to it no more, since I would probably nag continuously on the point. If the little journey is possible, - Grand; - and if not, we shall practice Patience, and continue to hold fast to the hope that this greatly to be desired event may be realized at another time in the not too distant future.

I don't seem to recall the location of the place you mention as an alternative in New Hampshire. I don't know that place, - that State, - very well. I assume the town may be somewhat rural, and if so, you would probably run into various phases of early Americans in the environs. Should it be not too far from Portsmouth, I think you might find some lovely old houses in that area, - although it is possible that unusual concentrations in that region under present dislocations of population might make it less early American in appearance than mere hurly-burly.

And thanks for telling me of how people fared during the past years abroad. It is too bad that "ans" family had to meet such a fate, although I am hoping that his previous tendency to travel

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a-far, and to dis-associate himself from them, by a distance of miles, at least, may have somehow taken out some of the shock that would inevitably been the more intense, had the relationship been the closer, as a family group. Thank heavens la belle mere made it alright, for in so doing, she has automatically provided someone with reason for gratitude to God and by coming through safely has, at the same time, provided someone with an object of consideration and attention, which, if I may say so, may be more satisfying, because of similarity to senses of values, etc., than any other object, which, although by circumstances must at the moment revolve momentarily in the same general orbit, still is seemingly so constituted as to describe a much broader arc, and somehow seemingly chosen by God for greater consummations. - "A more heavenly embassy", I think, is the way Rachel Annan Taylor expressed it in that marvelous full-page paragraph on page xvi of the Preface or Introduction to Leonardo the Florentine.

As I recall, the paragraph begins: "Few of us have not known some person or persons, so by nature lavishly endowed"....I realize I am not quoting it exactly, but that is the idea. And I know one. And that is enough to make life worth while.

Soon, I hope, we shall be having good news from Anita, although I am not sure just what good news would constitute in that case, since during the past years, I have constantly hoped she might be spared all the horrors, - and from the Stuttgart area there will also be particulars, and possibly one who meant much to Madine. And as I mention these several names, I find that side by side with my hopes runs an element of thanksgiving that I shall never visit those far shores again, and that "Neath the Southern Moon" another way of life awaits those who find in that setting all the elements that go in to make living more precious than it has even been known in the lands of strife and strain, where the great bowl of Heaven seems to encompass this Delta Shangrila from the chilling blasts of littleness and lack of longing for those things which stand for life and eternity, and a certain one-ness of God and Man.

I'm afraid I am not very clear in all this talk, and yet it somehow is dealing with imponderables, which, perhaps aren't very clear, mentally, but are distinct enough in realms beyond the medium of usual expression. I apologize if I have been too obtuse. But somehow I have a feeling that you sense what be-stirs me, even though my expression of those feelings have turned out to be unusually clumsy.

You mention the change of address of the institution which Mr. Pipes referred to. Thanks much for this, and I shall pass along the new location to him, in order that he may write direct.

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On the domestic front, my patient seems to sag visibly during this hot season. This morning, a servant tells me, she can scarcely take a step. She came down for supper yesterday, but she is obviously quite feeble, although at the moment, her spirits appear rather on the gay side. I also learn that there were showers of tears at J. R.'s house this morning, so I shall have to see Celeste and let her weep a little on my shoulder, and then I shall spend some time with my regular patient. All in all, it ought to be a fairly busy day, what with Caroline Ramsey and Helen Baldwin coming later in the day, and the need for a lot of discussion with Miss Ramsey regarding Little Mansions and Rodney.

I should be greatly concerned regarding the Madam's situation if it were not that I have seen her slump time and again to a point that would alarm one in any other case. But somehow the recuperative powers always well up at just the time you think things are reaching an inevitable point, - and so I am not as upset as I would be otherwise.

The clippings came in yesterday's mail, together with the Times Magazine, and we read aloud from the clippings and they afforded much by way of diversion and much by way of information.

On Saturday, the Library Commission gives a banquet and makes some sort of a gift to Essae Mae, for her 20 years of service with the Commission. I shall send her a telegram tomorrow, reading: "Saturday is your coronation day. Anyone can write books. Only you can get them read. Love, Aunt ' and f."

I am expecting her to pass by this way before long, as it has been quite a time since she last visited us. I did learn from la Johnston that while that bag was engaged in photographing Weeks Hall's place, Essae Mae and someone else passed by, and while la Johnston was laboring, old man river had the other ladies out in the summer house, doing what he could to dispense highballs. That angle of Louisiana doings will be interesting when Essae Mae touched home base and we can take things apart a little.

A couple of interruptions and time has flown. Accordingly I must fold for this time. I am sorry, too, for there were two or three other things I wanted to touch upon, but I shall have to let them go for another session. It will be nice if you will keep me advised in advance as to the plans for vacation, in order that I may not clutter up the office with communications during the temporary suspension of service. And in the mean time, let us all be of good cheer.....

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July 5th, 1945.

Memorandum:

Sutok my finger in a fan. Merely took off skin on the end of it, but it oozes and is sore, so will report but briefly, and you will pardon me until I do not have to hobble before I write more fully.

We covered a lot of ground yesterday, - taking several shots in color of St. Mary's on the Bayou (Little River), some of the big house here, a flock of Cane River, taking in the bridge and church steeple, Je and Celeine Cocque, several studies, and just a flock of studies of Clemence. Of the latter there were several of her painting, - outside shots, seated by the cistern, - a white kitten playing about at her feet. Some were in color and recorded the picture she was working on. They were good items. Then there were some of her cooking, some of her taking clothes out of the washpot, and others while scrubbing over the washboard. Others showed her hoeing cotton. Others of her taken inside the house, wherein she was pointing out certain details to me, in a corner of the room where many of her compositions were hung on the walls of the room. A shot or two of her instructing Mary Frances and another showing her inspecting a hem in a doll, - fashioned like a nun, etc., etc.

I think practically all of these will turn out good, and Miss Ramsey will shoot them directly to life, calling their attention to the handiwork of Clemence already in their Art Department.

That constituted about all of yesterday's activities, but that represented quite a long day, and I was satisfied, and not the least so because as I got to know Miss Ramsey the better, I liked her increasingly, and the pleasure of the day was the more because I realized that she was bound to be one of those who will make Arenbourg the gayer eventually when we have that place as we would have it, and all of us together will find life the brighter because all three of us, together with Mr. E. added for good measure, will hit it off swell. You will pardon me for breaking off here. I'll undertake another whack at this shortly.....

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July 6th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

In this day of cigarette shortages, it is more than moving to have three packs of Kools come to hand so unexpectedly. May I say thank you and thanks again, and not only for the cigarettes themselves, but especially for the never failing evidence of thoughtfulness, flowing so constantly from such a generous heart. I shall smoke them leisurely and each smoke ring will encompass a world of happiness as I contemplate the blessings of today and the promises of tomorrow's happiness.

In the same mail arrived a report, written while others relaxed where it was cooler, and the fact that you selected such a time makes the document doubly precious.

I am glad to have the precise date of your departure for your summer vacation, - July 14th, and I shall accordingly put my last memorandum, prior to your departure, in the mail on about this coming Monday. After that, I shall make plenty of mental notes to cover the intervening period until your return, so that you may have a fairly clear, although brief, account of what transpires during the interim.

I am so glad you are going to have this period of respite and in such congenial company. It will do you a world of good, I know, and the relaxation on the gallery of the Inn will help to build up another stepping stone on the highway to good health, which will stand you in such good stead for the days to come.

Because my finger still oozes a little, I shall not make this report as lengthy as I would otherwise, but I shall indicate that we are making good progress, and it would appear that several off-shoots of this visit may develop for satisfactory undertakings during the late summer and early autumn. Yesterday we took pictures of Madame Aubin's house, - a high cornfield now flourishing where only a year or two ago her ante bellum garden blossomed with bulbs and sweet smelling shrubs. We took the Francois Robieux house, - to indicate the white manifestations in architecture, - it was built by a white man, - as opposed to the mulatto houses. We also did several color shots of Celine and Joe Cocque and several of this house wherein I write.

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As things unfold, it would appear that we shall be able to get about three articles out of this photographic collection, - one of Clemence, one of Cane River and one of Melrose. The Clemence story will go in immediately; the Cane River will be undertaken promptly, 2- say within a month or so, and the Melrose almost any time after that. Life and the Saturday Evening Post, and a new magazine, about to be brought out by the Curtis Publishing Company, will all be aimed at as possible mediums for publication.

Either in August or October, Miss Ramsey will return, and we shall then undertake a flock of things in the "atchez area for the same publications, - and for others. It looks like a full program.

Miss Helen Baldwin, - who is Mrs. Baldwin, has important connections in Waco, Texas. She has an inside track on the newspaper field in that area. She has offered to put on a Clemence show in a local gallery for the Clemence things, with the press giving publicity. I am putting her in direct communication with Mr. Pipes who has many of Clemence's things already on mats, and they can work out the details.

Thus things move, thanks to the proper contacts, and the ripples will widen, I trust, with each succeeding splash. I might add that both Miss Ramsey and Miss Baldwin are swell persons, and it is nice to know that another will find them equally so, when eventually the terrace of Arenbourg will vibrate with good souls. I should add parenthetically, we took colored pictures of the Peter Metoyer family on the gallery of Arenbourg yesterday, - the photographs to indicate the coloring of the present generation of Grandpere's descendants, - but it will be nice to have the photo as a record of the gallery's appearance prior to the Metoyer's departure.

I have four or five letters, - Mary Rhodes, Rowan and so on, - to hand for several days, but as yet unable to get read, what with the pressure of other matters, but I hope to get caught up today. It is inclined to be cloudy outside at the moment. We shall accordingly take interiors of Melrose, etc. and this afternoon, we shall have old Flavite Metoyer here to take her in color standing along side her Grandpere Augustin ancestor. She is the daughter of old Francois Gassion Metoyer, and as deliciously ante bellum as Mme. Aubin.

You will forgive me if I write no more at this sitting, - I peck along so slowly. This week end will afford me more opportunity, however, and I shall make the most of it. And then there will be the Kools and when I am not writing, I shall still have communication possible, thanks to the unfailing telepathy department, - and I shall laugh to myself when I think of your arrangement to have la Johnston sitting for Dali for an ivy, - (possibly poison ivy,) bath....

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July 7th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I put down my Kool and afford myself of a post-coffee chat for the moment.

The days are busy ones, following along the same routine as indicated in my last couple of reports.

Yesterday we concentrated mostly on interior shots, with a view to an eventual article on Melrose, as a separate item from Clemence and Cane River.

We took some rather interesting exteriors of this house, and three or four very nice interior ones, in which I did what I could to enliven the scene by sitting in a chair or standing by a portrait or looking out a window, or any other dumb posture, to put a vaguest manifestation of life in the several settings.

In the afternoon, we brought old Flavite Metoyer over here from her residence in the priest's house, where she does a "bonne a tous" faire number. She is 76 years old, daughter of Francois Gassion Metoyer, and great granddaughter of old Grandpere Augustin. We got some nice shots of her before her Grandfather's portrait, and before her great grandmother's portrait. These pictures may serve to connect the past with the present so far as the Metoyer line goes and thus bring Melrose up to date. I reckon they will probably be used in the Melrose article.

In the afternoon we also got some shots of the big house, and of the loom house, in color, - nice studies, what with some splashes of yellow Day Lilies and Grape Myrtles (pink) in bloom. We also took some shots of tractors in the cotton fields, and a couple of good ones of Clemence. She was about to head out for a bit of fishing, and accordingly we took a "strike" at her, to fish pole over her shoulder, her 6 year old grandson along side, carrying a bucket for the catch. The background is a white gate, the white uprights of her gallery, the cabin itself, and some splendid big old white, white clouds on a deep blue sky, to give plenty of dash to the whole business. I think these shots about complete the pictorial record of our Cane River Vigee-Lebrun.

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Today we shall get some shots of the Melrose store, the
"gourage", the Saturday groups of negroes on the store
gallery, etc., etc., and possibly one of the Madam, who
continues a little droopy and inclined toward being
irrasible.

I think Miss Ramsey will leave for South Louisiana on
Monday, - Morgan City, I suppose, and will return here
on her way back to Marshall later in the week. Mrs. Baldwin
on Monday will head out toward Waco, and plans will be set in
motion without delay to get the Clemence Show in that place
under way. As Mr. Baldwin, I believe, owns the local news-
paper, we ought to get quite a bit of nice publicity on that
score, and that will be pleasant to quote from for other shows,
of course.

While in the road yesterday, we saw "ugabou's" little
Helen, - dark in coloring but radiant with white teeth
and an amazing slazzy little dress of watermelon pink.
I was the happier, in seeing her, because in the back of my
mind, was the promise there was the realization that
when the cold winds of Winter being blowing, Helen has the
warmth of garments you mentioned in your recent report, of

I shall take a chance on sending an air mail on Monday,
in hopes that it may reach you before your departure for
your vacation. I am so happy as I contemplate your opportunity
to get away from the city and I am hoping you just do a whole
lot of nothing, save sitting on the gallery and relaxing.

A couple of my old friends, - perhaps of 17 summers, are
awaiting me, to seek advise prior to the settlement of certain
pressing problems, before they take off on a truck which
will pass this way shortly, and as their needs are urgent,
I shall have to fold up at this point and get on with the day's
business.

Last night I thought of Arenbourg so frequently. We had
a literary evening in this house, - whipping up thoughts and
ideas for the Cane River article, and at the same time talking
a lot about art trends, and especially literary expressions of
one type or another. Somehow I felt as though a fourth person
were almost along side, and it was grand to contemplate such
eventualities when Arenbourg begins to function as a Delta
Olympus and people of good will can gather to commune and to
contribute those segments of mind and heart that go in for
making life so pleasant and so worth while.....

1270

July 9th, 1945.

This is the last note I shall write for a couple of
weeks, what with the impending vacation. I need not tell you how sincerely I hope that outing will
turn out to be a most restful and zest-giving experience, and
that your return will find you all perked up for the impending
season.

I shall think of you often, and do my best to keep
mental notes of the salient turns that transpire during the
interlude. May good weather favor your sojourn in the
mountains and happiness bless you throughout your stay.

On the home front, the ladies took off Sunday afternoon, -
Mrs. Baldwin for Waco, and la Ramsey for South Louisiana. They
departed on an enthusiastic note, pleased withal at the number
of pictures they had secured, and looking forward with much
anticipation to returning before long, to round out illustrations
for additional articles. As things look now, there will be one
on Ile Brevelle, one on Melrose and one on Cane River, - the
latter covering all the aspects fromatchitoches to Glouteriville, -
and the other article, - or perhaps pictures, which will supplant
Clemence's paintings, currently in the hands of Life.

The best thing about these two ladies is their sympathetic
intelligence, and the fact that they will eventually form
pleasant and valuable additions to the circle that will
eventually swing about Arenbourg. How pleasant it is going to
be when, after due patience, we get that domaine to functioning.

I realize of course, that you must be caught in the rush
of last minute preparations for departure. I shall be considerate
by keeping this note short. Locally things are much as usual,
with a nurse coming on Tuesday to give electrical treatments to
the Madam for her rheumatism, and Annie Gibson, an old friend, coming
on Wednesday to stay for a couple of weeks, possibly. I reckon the
nurse will be here probably three or four days.

I shall ask Annie to assist me in some of the things I
have in mind to do, in consequence of the impending articles mentioned
above. I shall write some publicity for the Waco press, in
preparation for the Show to be held there, - quotations from
J Pipes, author of Ziba, Lyle Saxon, Louisiana author and so on.

I have written James, acquainting him with particulars and providing him with information relative to the letter he will receive from la Baldwin, just as soon as she has consulted with the Waco gallery that will put on the Show.

In the publicity in that city's newspaper, reference will be made to the impending publicity that is likely to appear in Life regarding the Cane River Primitifs, and that will serve the dual purpose of inspiring the local bags to grab off a rare example of Clemence's handiwork, prior to their expected rising in popularity and consequent price, and at the same time, it will afford - the newspaper item, - will afford an excellent opportunity for other Art Reviewers to quote from the printed page when the Show appears in other cities.

I am not sure if the ladies staid just the right length of time, - or just a little too long, - in order that their impressions of Cane River could swell to a maximum of expression without becoming cluttered up with minute details, as sometimes happens when one begins digging below the surface. Save for one brief visit through the Kingdom of the Prudhommies, - from Bermuda to "atchitoches, - they stuck pretty well to - the Brevelle and the mulatto business. I warned them not to spill over into the Prudhomme business until after the Brevelle business was well in hand, for the wealth of particulars that would be spilled, once the adjacent territory were explored, would tend to confuse the clarity of the Brevelle subject. I hope they escaped. All right, I must keep my promise and not rob you of too much of your precious time at this very busy moment of the taking off.

You will travel with friends and spend your vacation with congenial souls. Thoughts of other, - unseen, will likewise attend you, a hundred times during the day you will realize, when momentarily alone, that those thoughts are ever present, and when with good and honest exhaustion, you close your eyes for the delicious sleep that follows such days of relaxation, you will feel, as you close your eyes, that those thoughts from afar are speeding along the air waves, and, wishing you rest and sweet dreams, are even this minute of admonishing. I had wanted to mention the Omar Khayam broadcast, which I trust you heard. I liked it, liked it a thousand times better because I realized another would like it, too.

I say, Alors, I stop, - so far as the written word goes.
The Department of Thought, however, functions forever...

Letter off to Clipping Service.

July 9th: - Last pre-vacation letter off to Grappling
Heard Jean Baptiste Matoyer house, greatest of remaining
mulatto houses is about to be torn down, on orders from
present mulatto owner, Clarence Compton. Went by to see it.
The roof was already being removed. Regretted Miss Ramsey had not
photographed it on Saturday when we debated the point.

July 10th, Tuesday. - Nurse, Mrs. Pickle, came to attend the Madam. Duties primarily to give electric treatments and persuade the patient to eat food. The latter speaks of neuritis, but has arthritis. Went through the Jean Baptiste Metoyer house. Original Melrose gallery was 40 feet. J. B. M. house 70 feet. Elegant layout and like nothing in any other great house, except those once existing on Cane River in mulatto region. Impressed by nice old double doors, three-quarters glass, lower quarter wood panel. Also like accompanying batten doors of wood. Contacted C. Compton with view to purchasing two sets, for eventual incorporation at Arenbourg, on the side giving on the terrace. Said the fireplaces had already been promised.

July 11th. Wednesday. Grand reports from Clipping Service and Dora. Former spoke of numerous interesting items, including 1837 life of Aaron Burr, vol. 1. Also new particulars regarding Prince of Gallon. Dora spoke of satisfaction over photographs taken by Miss Ramsey on Cane River, etc.

Thursday, July 11, - or 12th: - Rain. Roof off J. B. M. house. Took measurements of it in rain and mud. Six rooms of elegant proportions still left intact, six fireplaces, etc. Doors flat on floor in water. Discovered large door, formerly having 36 panes in upper half. Offered to buy it. Offer accepted. Many panes to be re-set eventually when installed at Arenbourg.

Friday, July 13th, - Poured all morning. Grand mail from Clipping service and splendid collection of magazines. at 4 p.m. got Angabour with big truck and group of colored friends, Mr. Prew, Peter, Little King, Sam, Smith etc., and went to J. B. M. house, where we picked up and brought back to Melrose 2 sets of double doors (glass) and the accompanying batten doors, plus the great door with 36 panes and several batten window blinds. Most of the casings gone for all these, but it will be grand to have these authentic old 1818 items incorporated in Arenbourg. The excessive humidity depresses the Madam greatly.

Saturday, July 14th. - Another grand report from "Lipping Service. Life is good. Patient is better. Curious Compton should have been the one to tear down the finest remaining evidence of the superiority of mulatto architecture and elegance, as contrasted with the white Prudhommes whose houses while pleasant, are lacking in anything of distinction, - or individualism, since there are Purdhomme houses all over the South but no Metoyer ones.

(over)

1273

Involved In tearing down this fine old J.B. M. house, the mulatto has torn up the card that would have taken all the tricks in the game, since the house was the last evidence, save Melrose, that the person with negro blood did not have to wait 2,000 years to acquire a culture equal to and an architecture superior to that of his white neighbors. And of all things, to use the demolition as an excuse to get some lumber to re-build the saloon, - in a dry parish! Miss Sally came up from Magnolia in the afternoon, having hard time catching her breath. I wasted my time and hers pointing out that the difference between mulattoes elsewhere and on Cane River is that the Cane River mulatto thinks of himself as white with colored blood, while mulattoes elsewhere think of themselves as colored people with white blood. She failed to get the point and declared they all were negroes and it didn't make any difference. And yet she asks me why the Cane River mulattoes are different.

Sunday, July 15th, - Up early and to Little River on horseback. Talked with Archillus about J. B. M. house. He was married in the Slave Hospital of that place. Many interesting details. Lingered long on river opposite St. Mary's on the Bayou, - loveliest spot in the region. Talked with several young colored friends about having their pictures "struck" during "So-say-shun" in August. Shared a Kool with them. Dinner with Charles and Ida Mazurette. Excellent. A little floored when, on mentioning beauty of St. Mary's, directly on route to Mazurettes, Mrs. Mazurette asked where St. Mary's was. I identified church for her. Said she had never remarked its pretty situation, - "there are always niggers along the way there whenever I have passed, and so naturally I look the other way". Amazing!

Back to Melrose at 5. Consultation of physicians at 6:30. Madam reported better than when heart specialist saw her a year ago. Says she doesn't have to go anywhere, eat anything she doesn't want to or take any medicine she doesn't feel agree with her. All statements based on lack of understanding of present set up. Predict a decline before autumn in consequence. Patient cross to nurse, who will probably not remain long. Certainly gay outlook.

Monday, July 17th, - Nice package to hand, Kools and the Dwelling Place. I liked to undo the string, thinking of hands that had tied up the package. Letter from Helen Baldwin saying Shop in Dallas or rather Waco welcomes opportunity for Clemence showing last week in July. I wrote much copy for Waco newspapers, quoting Woolcott, Pipes, Paxton, etc., on merits of the artist who paints by heart. Patient irritable, refused to eat dinner and take medicine, - on strength of specialist's remarks. Uhhh... humm....

(200)

1274

Tuesday, July 17th:-

Swell mail, including final note final pre-departure report which is grand, and to hand The Dwelling Place, Kools and copies of "Life", including articles on Congress in color and old haunted mansion in Philadelphia area. Touching pictures of "Black Boy". Wish I could share these with one. Also letter from Harnett Kane. Says is new book, - Plantation Parade, will appear Nov. 7th, at \$3.50. The Madam ordered one. Essae Mae came by for dinner. Saw the Madam half hour, remained with me until 4. Says Colliers or Liberty going to do series on South, articles by Barnett, she thinks. Must write Caroline Ramsey to communicate with Sat. Eve. Post on this point. Might impell them to rush Cane River and Natchez stuff. She hadn't heard from Old Man River. No one else has. The Madam is cross and not eating, declaring specialist said she didn't have to. I think nurse will not remain much longer. Did quite a lot at directing gardeners. Grass taking the place. Knocked off some stuff on Cane River article. Sure need someone to read stuff back to me. Mr. Breux too busy in the cotton to make a round. Among other guests at Coronation, said Essae Mae was Lois Lester, who presented her with pound of butter. Lois's husband, George, or "Jack" has cancer on face and is treated weekly in New Orleans. Somebody by the name of Westwick stopped at Cloutierville, saying he was from New Orleans and would be at Melrose Sunday to see me and take pictures of this house, African House and of Celine and Joe Rocque, - I assume on behalf of la bag Johnston or Lyle or possibly both. Think I shall balk on taking him to see Joe and Celine. They did a lot of posing for Madames Ramsey and Baldwin, following unkept appointments which la Johnston had made with him and never kept. Big moon, long walk, heart in New England....

July 18th, Wednesday:-

Heavy out-going mail, all of which was in my name, but all on the Madam's behalf. Something out of whack with this typewriter. "So-say-shun" announced for Aug. 15th. Must advise Miss Ramsey so she can "strike" groups, and arrange to record baptisms. The goose, - Chinese one, which Jack and I are raising, struck and killed by a car. High water in April took her nest. Now we have only the gander left. Visited Fugabou's Mama to give her medicine I obtained some time back from Dr. Miller, - mostly caffeine to give her some early more pep. For no reason on earth, found myself wondering about the burials and what kind of cemeteries Eskimos have. Their tombstones might be of ice, I should think. Considerable gardening, including felling of big old mimosa to save white Chinese magnolia. Made a flock of Cane River notes. at 9:30 p.m.; Mr. Breux ferried me across River. Moon was delicious. Wondered about its situation in the mountains. Jack gave me hair-cut. A colored lady at his house from Little River told me about seeing a gray horse and rider, both spirits, which passed her house on Saturday evening. Simple, untutored, keen and imaginative, - lush land, lush people; where in high water, a dozen cows were housed in St. Augustin's Protestant Church on little river, with all of them eventually gracing the rostrum, - an island at the time, and three of them dying on the altar. Melange of doings and folks, and confusingly set down as I fold up my beard.

1275

Thursday and Friday, July 19th and 20th: - Under the weather, which is hot and humid. Not the weather getting me down, but surprising swelling in most unexpected place. Applied kerosene and vaseline alternately, to no effect. Had visions of all sort of strange maladie. Went to town, consulted physician. He dubbed situation incredible. Removed a tick which had caused all the doings. Back to normalcy within 10 or 12 hours.

Saturday, July 21st: - Grand mail, being photo of New England bedroom. Looks lovely. Shall better picture the place tonight as I journey to bridge. Letter from Barnett - a couple of days back, saying his new book comes out on Nov. 7th. - Plantation Parade. Can't remember if I mentioned it. - Letter from Miss Ramsey. Says pictures came out pretty well. Clemence shots going direct to Life. Says a friend about to visit her, - on the Fort Worth Star. Thinks a Show could be arranged in Fort Worth, with ample publicity. Thinks my suggestion to do some picture books called Pictorial River Series a good one. We foresee possibility of using some pictures for periodicals and balance for photographic book. I suggested we start with Cane River, then do St. Catherine's Creek and then Bayou Sarah, to take in Miss., with the former and St. Francisville area in the latter. - No news from Dora, - probably busy with Waco stuff. - Gale Westwick came in late afternoon to take pictures for la Johnston the ones she had neglected to strike. Nice person. Says he hears from (from) friends, but not Miss Johnston that Lyle is still hitting the bottle. - Knocked off a couple of more rounds on Cane River article.

Sunday, July 22nd: - Filled with thanksgiving for evident rapid progress toward recovery, and greatly reduced swelling, following yesterday's removal of tick. Staid put all day. Mr. Westwick came by in morning. Confided he wanted to take pictures of Cane River on his own behalf for sale to magazines. I sent little King with him as guide. After all, Cane River doesn't belong to me, but I shall neither show him what Miss Ramsey thinks of taking and has taken, nor will I mis-lead him, as I might, were I to go with him. Pledged illness as excuse for not going. He returned after a couple of hours and reported success. Later, after his departure, Little King gave me a detailed report of what he did take. He didn't get Mme. Aubin-ocque's or the Francois Robieux house. Westwick threatens to return. He is nice. We spoke of the revolver Col. Colt invented and manufactured. Westwick quoted someone as saying: Lincoln set men free; while Col. Colt made them equal. Not bad.

Worked on Cane River article until 7. Took the nurse, Miss Pickles, for an airing as far as the bridge. Home at first dark, and preached a sermon to a wayward soul, caught in the act of lifting some shirts and shorts, neither of which can be secured locally. Having had the personal satisfaction of preaching the sermon, especially as I am a miserable sinner myself, I concluded my remarks by giving him a couple of the items he needed. He in turn, as by counter courtesy, volunteered to bring back some he had "borrowed" before.

3
1276

Monday, July 23rd: - New England letter. Life is worth while. In New England it is cool and quiet. Here, thanks to one soul, it is cool and quiet. Similarity of elements guarantees eventual identity of enjoyment of life which will be good at Arenbourg. Letter from Dora. Says Miss Bladwin and he have established contact. Clemence show in "aco will begin next week. Dora enclosed a 15 dollar check, in partial payment on openings purchased from demolished Jean Baptiste house for eventual Arenbourg use. It was sweet of him. I returned the check, however, for up to now the whole project seems to be based on efforts of two, and I somehow delay sharing investment at the moment, although later I shall be forced to do otherwise. Dora returns Scrapbook to me, Hastings House having said no. I shall take up the matter with Harmonson of New Orleans. The Madam better spends less time in bed. Stephen expected here today, but telegram says he must fly to Manila instead. Back in 2 weeks. Constant interruptions prevented me from getting far on manuscript. Liked the

idea of using the apricot for a Metoyer, pointing out that strictly speaking both peach and plum from which it sprang might object to having it classified as a horse of the same hue. Elegant night. Walked by Arenbourg, alone, yet not precisely. Sat on my gallery watching moonbeams drip from the slivered leaves of the banana plants. Still alone, still not precisely.

Tuesday, July 24th: - Letter from Essae Mae, reporting Saturday luncheon in New Orleans, were in 2 old friends of old "an river, ladies living in same hotel, report him as not having touched a drop since Melrose visit, gain of 10 pounds, and busy at work on current opus. So much for rumor, and not exactly identical to Westwick report. Our patient better and crosser. Rand down to Perry, re-addressed Express package, - manuscript from Dora, and forwarded it to Harmonson of New Orleans, together with letter. Back home, met Clemence, bringing in laundry, asked me to see her new pictures. Went afternoon on article. Walked nurse to bridge. Bill "inton stopped us on our return. We ate a slice of watermelon with him and his family. Sat with patient for a while, then under full moon, went down to 's house. He has done a couple of very nice things. Sat on gallery, she and I occupying chairs, with Mary Frances lying on floor and Yank half asleep in same situation. Very warm, perhaps in 80's, but nice breeze and moonlight on river eased thought of emperature. On way home, met drunken negro soldier, home at Little River on furlough from Hawaiian Islands. Talked with him a while but declined proffered good cheer. His ideas strange as to where he had been stationed and why, - probably due to combination of normal confusion plus moonlight and liquids. Back home, sat on my gallery until 12, wondering if and hoping that the moon over new England was a good. Clock struck midnight, and mocking bird in the crepe myrtle echoed. I folded up.

1277

Wednesday, July 25th: - Hotter than a biscuit in Louisiana. Wonder how New England thermometer reads. The Madam better. Nurse to depart Sunday. Annie Gibson, from Montgomery, La., 5 miles East of here on Red River, will come for 2 weeks. Slogged through some more on mulatto article. Secretary on Little River, with hoe hands. Need somebody to get me out of the bog of clumsy sentences. Perhaps tomorrow. Clarence Compton, owner of former Jean Baptiste Metoyer plantation offered one hundred four thousand dollars for that place by James W. Gerard. Refused. J. H. Henry tells me Bill Jones' 4,000 acres represent about three hundred thousand dollars in current values. Shall cite this figure as financial standing of contemporary status of mulattoes. All my negro friends worked from dawn to dusk in spite of heat, on Little River where Spring floods induced excessive weeds in cotton lands. At first dark, all of them, spick and span in fresh clothes, disappeared in the dark, heading up Bermuda road toward St. Mathew's church, 2 or 3 miles distant, to attend pre-So-Say-Shun religious meetings. With all this hot weather, some are bound to get religion between now and Aug. 12th, when baptisin's will come off. Hope weather may be good to effect good films for eventual pictorial river book creation. Curious dream last night, - L.L. arriving in La., at Derry (Tommerville Trolley) station which looked as big as the Pennsylvania, and after driving to Arenbogg, we sat for ever so long chatting in the library giving on the terrace, the drawing room seeming to be a duplicate of the Roxy theatre in Radio City. Strange settings and furnishing for Cane River, but otherwise everything was well.

Thursday, July 26th: - The Madam better, but childishly contrary at moments, - more to express resentment at having nurse than anything else. Recalled having once been to negro church years and years ago. Different members gave testimonials. One colored lady stood up and prefaced her remarks with this statement: "Mrs. Henry has a telephone in her house." The Madam quaked in anticipation of what might be coming next. The lady continued: "But I got a telephone in my heart, and it runs straight up to God!" The Madam was relieved and that was that. Letter from Miss Ramsey, saying she has forwarded a couple of reproductions of Clemence's paintings to the Waco Tribune, to be used in Sunday's paper, for publicity in opening of the Show on Monday. Miss R. remarked that her article in this last week's Liberty was illustrated with her photographs, reproduced in a miserable manner. She thinks Post may welcome articles on South, especially since Colliers is scheduled to do some by Harnett Kane. Thinks the Post may shy off Cane River's Children of Strangers because of racial element, but foresees possibility of snadwiching Ile Brevelle in between balance of river, stressing Natchitoches and Kingdom of the Prudhommes. Feels sure Post will like to do the Little Mansion of Natchez. Must try to get my bridgework in order before we head out in that direction. Radio announces Churchill defeat and ascendancy of Labor, while local gossip reports H. as controlling ten thousand acres alone in Ward 9, which is somewhere around the Parish but not near here. This combination of facts may seem related not at all, and yet, and let the Republicans lend an ear, the British elections will eventuate in repercussions in the U. S. before long. - And this must get going. How much I hope a whole heap of New England strength and good health will be present when this memorandum is read. Daily I find my mind dwelling in that section, and by Monday it will have moved back toward the metropolis, praying Heaven the while that the much deserved outing has proven a rich blessing to one who means so much to me.....

1278

July 31st, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Are you going to be here now?

It was grand to think of vacation time, and the relaxation and the physical and spiritual refilling of reservoirs for the next lap of the race. It is even better to realize that contact is a little closer, now that the time-out period is accomplished.

To hand in yesterday's post came an account of the Mount Madison jaunt. I drank in every word of it, and was twice impressed, not only by the vividness of the experience and the clarity of the picture but also by the feeling that somehow there was an intimate relation, as between the mountain and the plain, while the reference to the big old moon sliding slowly behind the mountains somehow fitted precisely into the duplicate picture of the moon which had been acting as a medium, as it sagged downward behind the heights of Montrose. I do hope the journey back to town, via the Mohawk Trail had elements of pleasure in it, too, - a trip that took one toward the opening of another stint of labor, the ultimate promise of which would be a further jaunt southward toward another type of labor and a mellowness of existence after the long stretch of rigors in the time between now and then.

Locally, things turn much as usual. The nurse left Sunday, and at the same time, Annie Gibson came by to remain a week. Thinks to plenty of rain over the week end, ~~felt rather miserable yesterday~~, - the weather plus plenty of racket, which is the normal development on Sundays. I think Annie will remain but a week, after which something else will develop. Slowly our patient grows less active. She might look forward to years of reduced activity, but I doubt if that will be the case unless there is a stirring of a will to live. The world's worst patient is one who has always had his own way and enjoyed comparative undiminished health. The physical curb on full exercise of the passing whim, plus the fulminations against an ailment of arthritis which cannot be eradicated at the instant expression of a wish goes far in getting view points tangled up, and slowly, if at all, does such a patient accept the fact that life can be pleasant, even though the speed must be slightly reduced.

over

1279

As for the enclosed pictures, I reckon they are pretty familiar to you, but I send them along as examples of Miss Ramsey's handiwork.

There are 4 of Clemence, one by herself painting by the cistern; one of her and Mary France, the latter looking too big and out of proportion because of her proximity to the camera; one of Clemence with her grandson, Brother, heading out on a fishing expedition; one of her pointing out pictures to an old friend

Of the other three, there is one of the African House, taken on the back stairs of the big house. One is of Cane River, taken from the bridge, with St. August's Church away among the trees. This view always reminds me of Shakespeare's birth place, Stratford on Avon. The bridge from which it is taken is the same bridge appearing in the earlier photo of last Spring, snapped from the terrace of Arenbourg. And the last picture is Mme. Aubin-Rocque's house, where, as you see, cotton and corn have run out her once lovely garden. There is the figure of an old friend on the gallery, but very elusive. Aren't the clouds grand in this study, - the rent in them suggesting that the whole place might suddenly be snatched from reality into heavenly oblivion.

Yesterday a letter came from Mr. Lottinville of the Oklahoma Press, addressed to the Madam, expressing delight with the balance of the Erwin diaries, and saying that the reading of the journals was being concluded, with the thought that either the diaries in their entirety or a volume on the Diarist, using the journals for a running account of his doings seems to be in order. I hazarded the guess the Mr. Pipes should act with me in accomplishing such a business. The lady thought the idea good. I shall indicate this thought in a letter of acknowledgement to Oklahoma Press. I am hoping the latter will look around and find some funds for the accomplishment of such a business.

I spent Monday in the dentist chair, and am looking forward to being done with that business within another week or so. It will be pleasant to then find myself leering a people without having to give thought to the Dracula influence.

Yesterday I forwarded the first half of the article, "Cane River's Children of Strangers" to Miss Ramsey, suggesting she look it over with a view to using it as a skeleton on which a St. Eve. Post thing might be hung. It was only about 10 pages, incoherent in spots, but with a few phrases that might be style pungent. I shall do the balance of the thing awaying her response, - and may something for Arenbourg come of it. I am glad you are going to be here now.....

1280

August 1st, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

This is one of those days when there is nothing of especial interest report, but the urge for a little chat is too great to be resisted, even though what is said doesn't matter so much.

There may or may not be something of interest in the enclosed note from Dora. I got off a response to the Lottinville letter yesterday, the thing being written not so much for the Oklahoma Press as for the lady who read and signed it. I remarked, over her signature, that aside from the pleasure of learning of the Press's satisfaction in reading the Erwin business, it was good to know that Mr. Pipes and Mr. Mignon, both so enthusiastic about the work (interruption) - were still interested in it, and that in the opinion of G. G. H., the Press would be very fortunate if able to secure their services in annotating the manuscript. I hope their funds will permit some such outlay for such a purpose.

I went down to Clemence's last evening, - the Madam having folded up about an hour before sundown. I sat on her gallery for about an hour and a half. The temperature was high but a pleasant cool breeze stirred the leaves of the wisteria growing in front of the house. She showed me a couple of pictures she had tossed off the night before. One was quite nice, - black paper with an apple green paint being the main medium to depicting a scene in the cotton patch where quite a few figures were picking.

Mary Frances, Winnie May, Junior and Brother, - the latter in the snapshot of Clemence going fishing, were frolicking about in the yard and their velvety voices were pleasant on the equally velvety dusk. Brother is a sweet child, about 6 years old. He and I seem to hit it off pretty well together. He seems in quite good health, although periodically he has stomach troubles, seeming to be the four year aftermath of the time when he was 2 years old, he somehow got into some Paris Green of which he ate quite liberally. Someday I shall see if I can't get the Parish physician from town, - Dr. Knipmeyer, who gets down this way sometimes to look after the poor, to give him a once over.

(over)

0851

1281

We had several batches of pilgrims yesterday, but I saw none of them. For the most part, I was in this house with Miss Annie who was culling some particulars regarding the mulattoes for me from the Cane River scrapbook. I seem to have stalled on the final third of my article on Cane River's Children of Strangers and although I have plenty in mind to say, I need a couple of dates and facts to hitch the thing on to, - and I shall get it from this material.

Mrs. Rand drove up from Alexandria in the late afternoon, - I guess it was around four o'clock and remained until six. She brought her son, just back from England, her sister, Mrs. Fife, and Mrs. Mattison with her. The latter three called on me while Mrs. Rand visited the Madam, who did not see the others. I learned nothing of especial interest from my guests although it was pleasant to see them. During Mrs. Rand's visit, Sister came up to see the Madam, asking if it would be alright if she parked the three children here for three days while she went to New Orleans to visit her husband, who is taking a month's extra study in some hospital there. I think the Madam thought one child would be sufficient to park here, since the Madam herself isn't moving any much, save about her room, and at greatly reduced speed.

It has been about two months, now, I believe, since the Madam has written so much as a note to any one. I try to knock off a few lines to this one or that of her former correspondents, but I am even neglecting that job in favor of the Cane River article, and shall continue to do the same, should the possibility of doing Natchez's Little Mansion develop.

I reckon word may come through regarding the Waco Show shortly, and I am hoping that may go over nicely. If any of the publicity comes to hand, I shall of course send it along to you promptly, so that you may be kept informed.

It is so good to sense to re-establishment of the normal contacts, only I trust you will make no effort to write until you are well straightened out in the office once more, for it always seems as though there are so many loose ends to get caught up after one has been on vacation for a time. You know I will understand perfectly.....

(106)

1282

0851

August 2nd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To hand the first report covering the return, and so many nice things about it, that I shall merely say how glad I am that there were so many gleams of sunshine shimmering on the landscape, regardless of the patches of shadow.

That the girl friend's brother should have arrived is grand. Often had I thought of him, but feeling that his situation was uncertain, it seemed better to omit inquiry in hopes that the best of all hopes might eventually be realized, after by-passing the long weeks of blackout. Thank Heavens that this hope was realized. I am so glad for you all.

And I think the bouquet was sweet. How potent of things that really matter is such a symbol and how much brighter is an entire world for the striking of one small candle.

With all my heart, I hope that Tuesday's visit to Fordham may dissipate rather than confirm certain bleak anticipations.

The enclosed clipping speaks for itself. I think Helen Baldwin did quite nicely in the publicity department. As for some of the phraseology, there may seem to be a somewhat familiar ring, but it has been pieced together and one or two sentences added that give it some added particulars that are timely, I think. In view of the girl friend's interest in Lemence, I thought she, too, might be interested in seeing the clipping, although I might point out that one name appears in the article which would seem to make it wiser to either remove or to withhold the article itself from general circulation.

Knowing nothing about spelling, I shall be unable to answer Helen's inquiry regarding the correct spelling of Primatifa. If the Waco dictionary doesn't reveal such a word, perhaps we can just charge the thing off as a new creation and let it go at that. Forse(interruption). - Since I have no other copy of this publicity at the moment, it might be well to hold this item, foreseeing the possibility for future use in some other newspaper. Accordingly you might eventually return it, although there is no rush about it, - a month's time will be soon enough, and perhaps in the mean time,

3889

1283

I shall receive a duplicate.

I shall write Mr. Pipes and Madam Baldwin today, favoring the San Antonio Show.

In the mean time, I am wondering if forwarding a copy of this publicity to Life would help or hinder the publication of the color reproductions by that organization. I can readily see it might further or deter their intention, - on the one hand confirming the status of Clemence's authenticity, while perhaps removing the "scoop" element for Life in the realization that the artist's fame is already starting to spread.

I have no need for the Baldwin letter which you might dispose of.

It's always good to talk with someone who knows what one is talking about, or driving at. Somehow the breeze of conversation with a sympathetic soul blows into flame those sub-surface ideas that might otherwise die out beneath the ashes. As I penned the paragraph above, the thought came to me that possibly the Waco Tribune would leap at the chance to run some excerpts from the Diary of old Benjamin Chase, - those sections revealing heretofore undisclosed particulars about personalities having to do with early Texas history, and especially about friends of old Chase with whom he hobbled in Texas prior to the fall of the Alamo in which some of them participated. I think I shall scout such an idea to la Baldwin, with a view to eventually making use of the Tribune's columns for copyrighting purposes of sections of the diary with appropriate comments. Thank you much for having turned the breeze in this direction.

The frequent rains and the unusually high humidity of July have given the cotton extraordinary growth, - meaning that with such height to the stalks and so much foliage, the crop is likely to be rather less than last year. I mention this because that suggests that the harvesting of the crop will be completed rather sooner than last year, - possibly by the end of October, - in consequence of which Peter Metoyer and family will move the sooner and Arenbourg will pass into our hands, and the terrace can accordingly be levelled the sooner and the general lines of the tapis vert the sooner defined.

Alright, - I guess I have taken up enough of your time for this sitting, and so I shall fold up at this point. I am so glad that you are back that the girl friend's brother is on a back, and that a bouquet was awaiting your advent.....

I should so much like to speak of Lennox and the countryside through which you passed. It is lovely and through your acquaintance with it, the South will mean so much more as New England forms the backdrop in your mind as you contemplate the evidences of Southern civilization, and how the forces of one section moved in opposition to the other in ante bellum times.....

1284

August 4th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Only a note this morning, after which I must get busy on a flock of correspondence for the Madam, and thence to the

Cane River business, - the article.

During the past three days, I have expected a flock of letters but nothing has come through, - Dora, Harmanson, Miss Culver, Miss Ramsey, etc., etc. It will all probably crash through at one time, as it sometimes does on a Monday, putting much strain on Mr. Brew and giving my own mental department some good exercise in keeping all points in mind, prior to disposing of the responses.

The greatest trouble about research, I find, is that the more one explores a subject, the more difficult it becomes to jot down the casual things, suitable for the average reader.

I have recently stumbled over a list of Cane River mulattoes who were members of the Patrol Squadron, formed in all counties and Parishes throughout the South in 1861, immediately following the April outbreak of the Civil War.

In Adams County, only the aristocracy belonged to the Patrols. I believe it was the same almost everywhere. And so,

by finding that a flock of local mulattoes of Ile Brevelle were members of the Natchitoches Board, I am impressed by the fact that in those troubled times, the mulattoes were accorded a place in the super-civil affairs, placing them on a plane with the white gentry of the times. Obviously their interests were identical to those of the white planters, but few people today and especially in the South, would want to believe such a parallel or should I say such a joint position was occupied by people of color. With all this in mind, it is rather easier to understand that quite apart from the social feelings of superiority on the part of the Metoyers, when considering the Jones, there should also have been the political resentment against old Carroll Jones, for when he came to Cane River in 1869, - in the midst of Reconstruction, he styled himself a Republican, - all of whose activities ran counter to the interests of all former slave holders and the propertied people of the South.

(over)

1285

At the moment I have a couple of scouts out to seek out some old mulattoes who may recall if Carrol took an active part in the political life of the Parish at that time. If that turns out to be so, then one understands a lot more clearly why the cleavage (?) between the Joeses and the rest of the River remained to distinct for such a long time. But now, of course, the Joneses are in the ascendancy, for they are industrious, intelligent and possessed of the power that goes with money, and slowly their succeeding generations will integrate with the older nobility.

It is fascinating to realize that the same old ~~pat~~ pattern that operates everywhere automatically made itself evident in the social life of these mulattoes, - the same kind of thing that Saint Simon was always driving at, and the same kind of thing that Proust used to detail with us a fine tooth comb. It must be a human reaction that will come to the surface any old place, even though the group wherein it appears has never heard of such doings elsewhere.

I must close with something that struck me as rather funny, especially as the lady concerned did not realize she was being funny and I never called it to her attention. I think the thing might be sent to the Reader's Digest or some such:

Seriously seeking knowledge the other day, I inquired of the Madam if she could tell me the life expectancy of the ant, to which she replied quite airily:

"Oh, ants live from generation to generation!".....

On second thought, I should hope so.....

1286

August 5th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The enclosures, I think, are of little interest, but I send them along regardless, thinking they might help keep the correspondence picture a little clearer.

I had looked for a letter from Miss Ramsey on Saturday, but none came through. I assume she may come this week to snap the baptisin' scenes on next Sunday, but am not sure.

All in all, it ought to be a fairly busy week, should both she and Mrs. Baldwin arrive. Clif. Pyrd and friend threatening to blow in, and Miss Kate Perkins on the docket to replace Miss Annie Gibson as expert assister at the bath, rubber, etc. It is good to be able to report that the patient is better in appearance than in years. Once she forgets about the late arthritis, she will be flying around mightily, but that may not eventuate right away.

Charles invited me to dine with Ida and himself on Sunday. Liking Little River so much, I felt very noble about declining, but thought it better to remain on this keyboard. In consequence thereof, I just about got rounded up the Cane River article, and with Annie's assistance, I shall put it in a little better order today, so that if Miss Ramsey likes the first part, we can readily attach this second part to the first, and so submit it with the photographs to some magazine or other.

I have tried to keep out the racial aspects as much as possible, since magazine editors, they say, are scared to death of the mention of such a thing at the present time.

But of course the only story about Ile Breville is bound up in the racial aspect, so perhaps the thing will be tossed out the window to whomever it may go. But if it is, that will be alright, since things will sooner or later get right about, and the thing can be published then.

I am scheduled for another sitting with the dentist, so you will pardon me for the revity. More later today probably..

1287

2831

August 7th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To hand your reports of Thursday and Saturday, both arriving in Monday's post.

Thank Heavens you had the New England outing. With all the doings being thrust upon you, whatever extra strength was stored up will stand you in good stead.

Your reports mean everything to me, as I need not explain, but I would ask you to forego the added effort of filing them at times when the pressure is so acute. You know perfectly well that I shall understand and will be glad that you are saving yourself those times which would be so well invested in catching up on relaxation rather than expending additional energies in reports.

Isn't it strange how the depression of the affliction on the one hand dovetails precisely into the ultra exuberant celebrations of the return of another member of the family group from the wars. Somehow the future of the patient and the doings of the celebrant both seem so futile. And somehow, as always, those who keep their heads and try to keep the boat from capsizing, instead of receiving the moral support they should receive and is theirs by every right, find their duties of maintaining stability but added to.

With the Divine Law of Compensation never failing, perhaps one may find a measure of strength and comfort in the thought that after these trials and cares, peace at Arenbourg awaits the true in heart.

The postman brought no mail from Miss Ramsey yesterday, which disappointed me somewhat, since I had expected to learn if she would be able to make a round this week, with a view to getting some baptisin pictures this week end. Possibly we shall hear from her today. It is said that two more people got religion over the week end, and if this be true, and the low of averages continues to operate during the balance of the week, we shall have several converts by Sunday. It is the custom here to have baptisin's in two or three churches at the or rather on the same day, each held an hour or two apart, enabling the congregation of St. Mathew's for example to witness the event in Cane River and then fly on to Morris Hill or St. Mary's on Little River to wind up

1288

the business there. This would afford two difference scenes and somehow come nearer to guaranteeing at least one or two good shots.

In view of the Madam's schaphazard manner of responding to conversation at times, an example transpired the other day which I thought was quite amusing.

"For no especial reason, I asked her what was the life expectancy of the ant. "Oh, they just live from generation to generation", was her response. I may have mentioned this before, but I run the risk of repetition because I think it funny and perhaps you will concur.

I must skip to the dentist now but will be back on the morrow.

nest

August 8th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Twenty five million times since yesterday have I pondered upon a whole roster of emotion, of fore-sightedness, of necessity and coincidence. After sealing my report yesterday morning, I quitted this house, vaguely puzzled as to just how I was going to manage a couple of dozen things. Stopping to post my report, I found a report awaiting me, - registered. As Madam Beaumont casually remarked, in throwing in the birth of her daughter between paragraphs of her Journal: - "Lo! I had a daughter."

May I say thanks twenty five million times, and both for the printed items and for the typed; for all was more precious than I can explain. Perhaps the most precious thing about the whole business is that even without explaining, I feel sure the sensations are felt whether set down in words or not.

Returning from town yesterday morning, I brought home the restored facade, - a vaguely cumbersome concession to beauty, which up to the moment is lacking in comfort but well under control. I can say "capacity" and six times six is thirty six" without so much as a lisp, which is a triumph in something or other, but whether I shall eventually discover that the thing is perfect and therefore able to recede into a state of naturalness or if it will require further labor awaits the developments of the future.

I am glad you were interested in the account of the Jean Baptiste Metoyer house, as mention in my journal jottings. At the time, it seems to me I merely sketched the salient points, and eventually I must enumerate details. I believe the house was built in 1818. From Jean Baptiste, it passed to his son, Tranquillin (?) Metoyer. I am not sure of the spelling. And from the latter it went to his widow, and I believe Capt. Jordain, a white man cheated her out of it. From Jordain, it passed to David Louve, and from the latter to Lewis Jones, whose widow married Clarence Compton, and it was the latter who tore it down.

interruption

1290

Of the openings obtained from the house, the double glass doors I like best, I think. These have the batten blinds, - or rather storm doors to match. The latter are prettily pannelled (perhaps one n), and I t ought these might eventually be used on the openings, - one in each unit, of la maison de la reine, giving upon the terrace at Arenbourg. The single door, quite wide, is the other prize piece, - what with its 36 small glass panes in the upper half. Some of the glass from these have been broken, but I reckon (interruption) they can be replaced easily enough. I haven't investigated those still intact to see n if they are the old original glass, - wavey and streaked. I thought this door might eventually be incorporated in an opening giving between two interior rooms, - with possibly the glass being removed and replated by tiny mirrors, which ought to give a very delightful scintillation of a host of reflections and give much additional light to any place it is used.

In yesterday's post, I had looked for a note from Miss Ramsey, Mrs. Baldwin and Pora, but no word came through. I reckon there may be s mething today. We are now Wednesday, and baptisin' is on Sunday, so we should get the cameras polished off pretty soon.

I am glad you liked the Cane River scenes, and somehow with them the general appearance of the countryside will be the more familiar to you when you arrive.

I cannot refrain from remarking, as news of the Atomic bomb is released and details of the impending conditions this winter in Europe come to hand that although one fails frequently to comprehend the blessings, even though painful, of times gone by, still how thankful I am for those whom I love that things abroad transpired when then did in the late 1930's. What a comfort that certain people are safe and in eternal peace, and how much more peaceful will lie the years ahead when in building a haven of rest, we have no unpleasant contemplations of those, once so close to us in life, who have gone on to a far better home.

I must stop at this point. Interruptions have been frequent and long this morning and it is time for the postman to be heading this way.....

1291

August 9th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The sum and substance of yesterday's incoming first class mail was the enclosed. It is from Mrs. Pattison, who was here last week with Mrs. Brand, - Blythe, and you will notice she suggests they may pass this way today. I hope so. We need people from the outside world.

Things drag along in a manner that seems to grow better physically and the opposite in spirits. Such radical changes and remarkable cures are transpiring from time to time that it is impossible to let the Gloom Department take over, although I frankly feel that about September of October there may have to be some hospitalization for our patient. Eight or ten days seems to be about all anyone, - old friend or nurse, m can remain. Miss Annie, instead of departing on Monday when Miss Kate arrives, will leave Saturday, - if not before. That's all on this score, but it keeps you advised as to how things turn.

Yesterday afternoon I knocked off the final page of the Ile Brevelle, - Children of Strangers, business. Having sent the first half to Miss Ramsey, I would be inclined to forward the last half in today's mail, but shall not do so until hearing from her. I thought there would a be a line yesterday, but as none came to hand, I assume there may be word today that she is arriving, and so by keeping the manuscript here, - if she does come this week end, - we shall be able to go over the whole thing and expand it in some places and contract it where ever needed.

Today I am going to begin outlining The Little Mansions. I'm afraid of stormy weather on that subject before it gets done. Photographs will be required, in order that I may know what subjects are going to be covered. Some of those will be difficult to secure, - such as Foster's Mound, for example, where the house, a-top the Indian mound, is surrounded by live oaks planted on the top of the mound, almost completely hiding the building. If the camera is far enough away to indicate the elevation of the mound, contrasting with the surrounding countryside, the distance will almost be too great to catch the house itself, so thoroughly surrounded as it is by the trees and blanketed with shade. A close up is also difficult to get, - if one merely wants to eliminate the trees so the house can be seen, since the house covers the entire top of the mound, making it impossible, - unless one were to build a small scaffolding, to get anything but a view as one might of an individual, the camera being placed on the sidewalk.

1291

1292

The Wailes house should be comparatively easy. The Monette House shouldn't be too difficult, - although it is a little barren looking around the place since they cut the live oak avenue that passed from the gate along the reflecting pool to the house. The Affleck house will be easy, and I think I shall include Windy Hill, - since it is not on the pilgrimage any more, and it is always good to drag Mr. Burr into such an article, since he is well enough known to make his personality appeal to the average reader. The trick in all this will be to stress these things in the shots to be taken and to round out as many more as possible, with a view of accumulating others to be used as a basis for the St. Catherine's Creek book which will roll out later.

It certainly is going to be nice when Arenbourg is established so that people may come this way without the spectre of the axeman in the background. And in the mean time, we might as well keep driving as hard as we can.

I reckon there will be a report from Dora or la Baldwin regarding last week's showing of the Cinderella masterpieces. That ought to be interesting, too, and I shall send along the reports as they come to hand. And speaking of the latter lady, recalls to mind that the little boy, - Brother, - pictured with her, starting out on a fishing expedition in the snapshot taken in front of her cabin was the victim, 2 years back, of a large eating of Paris green, which made the poor child a little puny, and I am currently engaged in getting some health building food for his consumption, since the Paris green seems to have upset his stomach for ever so long following the original encounter. Surely the stuff itself has long since disappeared, but I reckon a natural consequence was a general weakness of the stomach department.

There are other points, but I must slide along at the moment and dump some oil on the waters, and so get back to this machine on the little Mansions. Twenty five million times a day I am thinking.....

There were enough visitors yesterday, - not so many in numbers, but their spread was such that they filled in the whole day, and that is all to the good, since it diverted our patient's mind from her aches, and left her in a happy frame of mind when she folded up about an hour before sundown, as is her custom. Dr. Knipmayer, the Parish physician in charge of Public Health, always passes by here on Thursday morning's. There is a clinic along side of St. Mathew's school, three miles up the Bermuda Road from Arenbourg. This functions weekly on Thursday mornings, after which Dr. Knipmayer heads down this way, stops off to chat with the Madam, and thence continues a southerly course to Magnolia where he always dines with Miss Sally (Hertzog). He is a kindly man, reminding one somewhat of a kindly Newfoundland dog, - with an accent on patience and general regard for human beings. Aside from the pleasure of seeing him there is the additional satisfaction of knowing that one may secure tonics or special attention for friends of color through this contact, and frequently without the need of the ailing one to go to the regular clinic. He was followed in his visit by Miss Bertha and Hope Haupt. Don't you think Hope Haupt is a combination, - especially when spoken of? Bertha and Hope are girls in their middle 60's, perhaps. Their father and mother came to Natchitoches ever so long ago, - either directly or indirectly from Germany. They both teach at the Normal, - now called Northwestern State College at Natchitoches. They are, like Dr. Knipmayer, vaguely on the dull side, so far as originality of ideas go, but all wool and a yard wide, and accordingly good for any soul coming in contact with them.

1293

1291

August 10th, 1945. Memorandum to Clipping Service: No mail from Marshall or Norman, - and I can't say why I should have spelled them with small letters. I received a line from Cliff Byrd, saying he would come here on Friday to remain until Sunday or Monday.

Miss Annie will leave on Saturday, and so things turn in these parts.

There were enough visitors yesterday, - not so many in numbers, but their spread was such that they filled in the whole day, and that is all to the good, since it diverted our patient's mind from her aches, and left her in a happy frame of mind when she folded up about an hour before sundown, as is her custom. Dr. Knipmayer, the Parish physician in charge of Public Health, always passes by here on Thursday morning's. There is a clinic along side of St. Mathew's school, three miles up the Bermuda Road from Arenbourg. This functions weekly on Thursday mornings, after which Dr. Knipmayer heads down this way, stops off to chat with the Madam, and thence continues a southerly course to Magnolia where he always dines with Miss Sally (Hertzog). He is a kindly man, reminding one somewhat of a kindly Newfoundland dog, - with an accent on patience and general regard for human beings. Aside from the pleasure of seeing him there is the additional satisfaction of knowing that one may secure tonics or special attention for friends of color through this contact, and frequently without the need of the ailing one to go to the regular clinic.

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1294

The Haupt remained until noon, and at 2 p.m., Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Pattison arrived. They broke their visit by running up the river as far as Bermuda to seek out a place where they could come with two guests to spend a week or so some time later in the month. We visited Dr. Hebert Prudhomme's place, ostensibly to inquire about such particulars, but in reality to give the two ladies a chance to see that plantation home, its crumbling avenue of live oaks and some of its lovely silver and family portraits. That is the place I may have spoken of before, - built by bachelor Jean Prudhomme before the Civil War, and saved from burning when the Yankees came by the flying of a French flag from its house top, - a flag which a guest in the house had brought as a present when coming from Paris to visit for a little while, only to be stuck on Cane River by the outbreak of the war and the blockade of the lower Mississippi.

At five we were done with the Prudhommies and came back down La Cote Joyeuse as far as St. Mathew's, where a cabin was reserved, and so back to Melrose, and the ladies continued on to Alexandria.

Mrs. Rand spoke of the return of her son in law, - Whitfield Jack, from Europe. An officer in the 82 air-borne, he had maintained data and diary covering that organization from its inception at Camp Claiborne near Alexandria, through Africa, Italy, France and Germany. In late April, while in the last named country, he and his associates decided to have the data and diary bound, and contacted an excellent printing house in the German city, - I did not learn its name, where they were then located. Although the whole town had been taken over by the Americans, and the printing presses commandeered, as a gesture of good will, the officers instead of ordering, negotiated with the staff of the printing house to print and bind the book, - 3,000 copies, - for them. The staff seemed delighted to assist in the bring out of the book, and delighted to learn, although they could scarcely believe it, that they would be paid for the job. Well, the job was undertaken, and executed by dint of hard labor, in elegant style, and much to the satisfaction of both the printers and the officers. They were paid in full, the latter, and after delivery of the books had been made, the Americans learned that on the following day, they would have to relinquish the city to the Russians in whose zone this particular city fell.

But Whitfield and some of his fellow officers, before leaving on the following day, felt they wanted to return to the printing house and thank the staff for the excellence of their work and say how satisfied they were with it, - just prior to leaving. They visited the establishment with this in mind, but to their disappointment, found the place deserted, and never again did they see the people who had done the job for them. Apparently the fear of the advent of the Soviet forces impelled the people in that section or the city to flee. In any event they were gone, but Whitfield has his volume which he treasures highly, - naturally.

1295

It has been good listening on the radio this morning, what with the report that the war may be approaching its final end. May it be so and may an Arenbourg dawn streak the East the earlier.

Next will come the reconversion problems, of course, but just as the full force of military repercussions are tempered long before they reach this remote situation, so will be the peace swells that will be lessened in strain and intensity before they arrive in this peaceful countryside.

Here, while delighted over something that is vaguely felt as good for everyone, - eventually, one talks of the progress of the cotton crop, - rather behind schedule this year, the program for So-sayshun, the number of converts, the breaking of limbs from the pecanes, too heavily loaded with fruit, and so on and so forth.

And aside from all these considerations, I shall harbor those that fit in with impending undertakings, - the layout of the article on The Little Mansions, and leave it to fate to open the front gate, such a color camera arrive today or tomorrow to undertake a further recording of Cane River for ultimate publication, - and possibly additional funds to set Arenbourg in order. How pleasant it is going to be eventually when these ground swells from afar may be shared and when individual undertaking in the literary department may be shared along with the butterfly lilies and the soft Southern nights.....

1296

August 11th, 1945.

Memorandum: -

Only a moment before post time, but I want to utilize it.

Miss Annie departed unexpectedly Friday night at supper time, - her daughter having suddenly be stricken with a peridicitis, and undergone an operation before her mother could reach her.

We shall get through the week end without a companion for the Madam.

Cliff came about 11 yesterday morning, - Friday. He brought me a most elegant plan of "La Maison De la Reine" - about 3 by 6 feet. It is so elegant that I think we shall have to eventually incorporate it in Arenbourg, placing it under glass, a-top a library table, or some such.

He has converted the French measurements into the American equivillant, - feet and inches, and you will be delighted with the way the thing turned out.

Interruption.

That was Mr. Charles' serynat, asking me to come to dinner on Little River tomorrow, - Sunday, but of course I shall be unable to accept, and I shall write him accordingly.

I am a little disappointed to say that no mail came through from Marshall, Texas, - in fact no mail came from any direction, so with the numerous converts we have for Sunday's baptisin', it looks as though a fine opportunity may slip by. I shall wire Miss Ramsey this morning, - should there be no mail, saying: "WE SURE ARE GETTING CLOSE TO THE 12th AND THE BAPTISIN'. HOPE YOU AND CAMERA ARE UP TO EXPECTATIONS".

Must gallop at this moment. Back shortly.....

1297

August 13th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Only time for a brief note t is morning.

A telegram from Waco says that Miss Ramsey is there, confined to her bed with influenza, Mrs. Baldwin acting as nurse.

Later today I shall write a letter, explaining that I have put in a busy week end, writing sermons in anticipation of a Revival to be held at St. Mary's, following So-say-shun next week, with baptisin' - there being converts, on the Sunday following, which will be August 26th, - and that will be good all the way round.

No mail on Saturday, and so I am looking for some today, - probably from Dora, and I hope from New Orleans.

The reason I must break off so early in this report is the fact that the house girl has just come to me to say that the Madam has fallen in her bath, and cut her knee quite badly. She can walk alright, the girl says, and has admonished her not to tell anyone of the fall, but I had better walk by casually, and see how things are going. Obviously she must have someone to stay with her, - but Heaven alone knows where the person can be found, - and once located, how long the person can hold out, as about 8 or 10 days seems to be about the limit anyone can make it.

Miss Kate perkins arrives today, and will remain for a week or so.

I'll try to do better on the morrow.....

1298

ceet

August 14th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service.

To hand your air report, the answer to which had already gone forward sometime before, so that I need not re-assure you on the matter of the former report, - with its precious enclosure, which came to hand all safely. I would add, however, that were I to reiterate twenty five million times how much that report has meant to me, I still would not half express my gratitude.

I am glad you enjoyed the recent communications and the photographs. I thought the one of Mr. Breux, which I should have remarked was taken on my front gallery, was quite good, I thought. You will be interested in realizing, - and there is no means of knowing it unless I mention it, that for purely sentimental reasons, I gave him a report of the Clipping Service to hold in his hand, - one that had just arrived at the moment we were about to "strike" the picture.

By this time, the general situation as regards your patient and his future will have been determined, and I am hoping that lots of worry and suffering may be eliminated by the operation. It has been such a busy year, - and I constantly thank heaven for the New England strength that was absorbed to help bridge these trying times. It goes without saying that I shall be looking for a line to indicate how things developed, during and following the operation.

Incidentally, I got a big laugh out of the Casanova complex in regard to forgetting the lower bridgework. When a "concession to beauty" is misplaced, it seems, not even a major operation can hope to hold first place in the mind of the patient. Isn't it wonderful how little insignificant things like that can sometimes eradicate the otherwise mental disturbance that would be consuming a person?

That you should have found Natchez inscribed on the Mount Madison Golden Book is remarkable, I think, since so few people from that place travel. I think perhaps the person may be a new-comer to that region, - or possibly an oldster I have never met. In any event, I don't recall ever having heard the name outside of the Carolinas.

1299

From the enclosed communication from Dora, you will note that Clemence is headed for some raiment. This leads me to conclude that having thus been fortified, - although possibly with summer things, - she may not be on the receiving end of the heavier things which you mentioned some time back. I have in mind, when these arrive a little later, to consult with Mr. Breux's grandmother about some of them, for I think her son, Fugabou, ought to be helped out a little with these items, - that his his children, - Helen and Billie Jeanne, - what a name! Fugabou is just itching to have to cotton crop gathered so that he can get his tractor to stirring up the terrace at Arenbourg, and a couple of warm things for his offspring ought to add impatience to the pitching he is already doing to get on with things.

I was interested to learn from Dora that the place where the October Show is to be held is near Austin. I shall write him, explaining that Mrs. Graham Medley is a resident of Austin, and with her husband on the Supreme Court bench of Texas, and herself the President of the Graden Clubs of Texas, - plus the fact that she already knows Clemence, we may be able to do something quite nice by way of publicity either in Austin itself or in the other place, via Austin.

I have outlined the religious programs of Cane and Little Rivers for the ladies Ramsey and Baldwin, and forward the same to them, covering the next two weeks. A new highway, - shelved at the time of the April floods, is being constructed to Little River, and what with that coming along nicely, and the promise of a full moon next week for the revival sessions at St. Mary's or St. Augustine's, - not to be confused with St. Augustin's., I think we might be able to get quite a few good pictures. The frequent showers in these parts have delayed the opening of cotton, and so picking will be delayed for a couple of weeks at least, I think. It was their wish to get some good pictures of the gin in full swing, etc., etc., for the Cane River book, but should they arrive too early for cotton, they can always get another shot at it in October, when we undertake to do the Little Mansions business.

It is good to have Miss Kate here. The Madam retired a little after 6 last night, and so Miss Kate and I took a little turn about the gardens. I think she is impressed by the gloom that settles over the big house, especially in the morning. The fact is that the patient, going to bed so early, is naturally all slept out before dawn, whereupon pills are taken to induce sleep, and these do not wear off until almost noon, although the patient gets up about 8 a.m., and so the vicious circle goes on. Everything is moving along alright in all directions at this writing. May it be the same in your immediate neighborhood.

1300

August 15th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

How good it is that the firing has ceased.

According to my radio, every hamlet and city in the nation witnessed dancing in its streets last night.

I was grateful to God for the ending of the war, but I didn't notice much dancing in the Melrose streets. Possibly that was because we don't have any streets.

But I must confess that while I did not precisely dance, I did waltz up the Bermuda road by moonlight, just to see how Arenbourg slept under the pale blue canopy of a star spangled sky. It was lovely, and somehow the vast business that had come to an end all around the globe an hour or two before somehow in my mind ushered in an era that would see the ground work for Arenbourg set in motion, and I was happy, because in my heart I was not alone in the pleasure of anticipating such a prospect.

It is curious how the little episodes of our daily lives somehow loom so much larger than the vast doings on a grand but remote stage..... In spite of the knowledge that a thousand vattleships would no longer pour forth their broadsides and that several million men would sleep out the night in peace, my mind was often turning toward El Paso, where about now Harold Meziere and his family are traveling toward California.

Harold has for years been in charge of the Melrose garage. His two children, about 8 and 10 years old, are about as fair as children without negro blood. Last year Harold and Margaret decided that as heirs of the old 18th century Marquis de Meziere and a whole flock of Cane River gentry, they could not bring themselves to send their children to school with ebony faced negroes. Accordingly their minds turned to California where the children could get an education without such degrading, - as they felt, associates. Accordingly they closed their business, - or rather turned it over to another man to operate the garage, and so, on Sunday, headed out toward the Golden West.

(over)

1300

1301

Now that the war is over before they reach the California line, it is very doubtful if they are able to cross that barrier. And even though they may get through, they will probably head into an unemployment situation that will make it impossible for Harold to get a job for quite a while, since, I believe, California has some quite rigid laws about local workers getting jobs before new comers are given any.

So naturally one cannot keep from thinking of this little caravan as it crosses the great American desert. What with the rest of the world drierous with joy that the main problem is over and done with, these pilgrims must have quite another set of emotions, stemming from the uncertainties that must trouble their peace of mind as they journey along toward a future so beclouded with financial doubts, - and all based on imponderables that few if any can fathom. What a lot of tangles a mixture of races and prejudice can weave.

Yesterday, although it was pretty hot and humid, I spent most of my day at physical labor, devoting myself for the most part to gardenias and japonicas. Already the cameallias are forming their buds, which will blossom next January and February. I have but a few I call my own, and which will eventually find their way to Arenbourg. Of the gardenias, there are a greater number, and I am fortunate enough to have some peat moss to put around the stems of both these plants. Peat moss makes a good fertilizer, but it is even more valuable as a holder of moisture, so that it retains the dews and damps that gather nightly and feeds the plants during the hotter part of the day. I am giving an eye to cannas, too, which thrive mightily in these parts, and I think we should have one large round plot of them somewhere in the garden. Usually the bannanas take care of themselves, and I am experimenting to see which of my plants are the sturdiest, so that they may be transported during the winter, too. Just one big old clump of them will give a very pleasant tropical effect, I think, and probably in the East garden, and not on the terrace which I think ought to remain rather formal, - being devoted mostly to greensward and magnolias.

When Fugabou, Jack and Ezra get to rolling their tractors on the terrace this autumn, I think I shall have them operate them with a view to dropping the terrace about a foot or a foot and a half, say about 25 or 30 feet from where the gallery of the maison de la reine will be situated. This will afford an opportunity to have a round jet on the first terrace, immediately in front of the gallery, and at the same time provided for a smooth grass plot on a lower level, - seemingly to parallel the smooth surface of the water some 10 feet lower and to the west, while at the same time, if the lowering of the tapis vert can be accomplished, it will give the effect of raising la maison de la reine to greater height, and so enhance the effect of rustic grandeur which it may eventually embody. Forgive all these details, but I cannot resist discussing them with one who will share the eventual effects.....

1302

1302

August 16th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

A letter from little Miss Robina in yesterday's post constituted the sum and substance of personal news from the outside world. Miss Robina has been ill for a couple of months, and is only now back at her office.

She made inquiry regarding GUMBO YA YA, a book which was stirred up under Federal patronage when Lyle was head of the Writer's Project in New Orleans. As I understand it, it is scheduled to appear October 28th. Lyle says it has much to do about garbage heaps in New Orleans and that it will infuriate a lot of people. I believe he and Eddie Dryer edited it. Once the thing was partially set up in type, I think either by Oklahoma or Houghton Mifflin, and then shelved. I don't know who is bringing it out at long last, and I think I shall not be much interested in the item.

Last year, when Lyle was on the State payroll for \$6,000.00 he claims to have proof-read the thing. In doing that, he claims he generously paid off his indebtedness to Louisiana for the six thousand he got as State Historian. Of course that makes no sense at all. Louisiana had nothing to do with Gumbo Ya Ya, as that manuscript was written on Federal time and pay, and was more than a thing of the past when Lyle left WPA, - or it left him, - and he went on to another job. He will receive nothing from whatever dividends it may make, since from the beginning it was bought and paid for by the Federal Government. There that matter stews up to now.

Up to the present writing, we have not heard from him direct since he left here in June. Two days after his departure, the Madam sent him a couple of packages, one of which was a red dressing robe of mine, which was kind of her, but which she now regrets. So do I.

Madam Wenk saw him a week ago in New Orleans and says he is just fine, putting on weight, and flying about the city madly. And none of that, of course, makes any sense, although, by some miracle, it may all be true, - a broad statement whenever applied to anything in that direction.

(over)

1303

I find myself thinking of you so often this week, especially in regard to the calls you must have to attend the sick, not to mention the normal course of celebrations which were probably attendant upon the Japanese fold up.

Locally, our patient appears to improve physically, although there is still quite a bit of enjoyment in the hold over of ill health. Miss Kate Perkins will leave here on Friday. From then on out, until the next up set, the lady in the big house will be alone from folding up time, - about an hour before sundown, until the servants arrive around late dawn. Last year, it was the heart that gave the worry, this year it was the arthritis. Now neither of those things seem to be remembered, but general dissatisfaction at not having died a year ago seems to be the tune by which sympathy is most likely to be acquired, and that tune is played out for all it is worth, but usually more in the morning than any other time.

I take this to be the results of codine which may or may not be taken nightly. Of course if one folds up one's beard at 6 p.m., after spending the day on the sofa, it is only natural that by 3 or 4 a.m., one would be slept out. Then the codine comes in to play, and I suppose its after effects linger on. Afternoons seem to be the brightest time of the day.

Your friend, "arnett" came through with a letter the other day. I thought I had mis-placed it, but I find it among my treasures here on my desk, so you may figure out why he penned it. I don't know, since usually there is some ulterior motive behind what he does. Perhaps he is expecting to spring something shortly and this is a wedge opener. I notice he does not acknowledge receipt of the check sent him in our last letter, covering his forth coming opus.

As I recall the contents of his letter, I think at the time it was read, he was perhaps fishing for a crack about la bag Johnston. He will be disappointed. There is also another interesting angle in the letter. He speaks of "the photographer", who has had difficulty in taking the Melrose shots. What photographer. Certainly not la bag. I am just wondering if the Westwick person, here a few weeks ago, could have masqueraded as la Johnston's assistant, taking picture for her, whereas in reality, he was taking them for "little Hornet". Well, I don't care how it was, but obviously there was something curious about the thing.

It rained again yesterday, making the cotton taller and less and less productive of the staple. It damped the ardor of many local friends, too, people who had planned to go to the opening of St. Mathew's "So-say-shun meetings. I want to go Friday night to hear the sermons. I think I have remarked that it is the local custom to bury people when they die and to preach a eulogy at So-say-shun time, - taking a day out to do a thorough job to cover each individual case. These services are usually quite good. we must eventually attend them jointly.....

1304

August 17th at Melrose.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

We seem to be getting close to illustrating that line from "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning". The daily showers have stepped the cotton up to such a point that there are fields of it higher than my head, which, I suppose, brings it about even with "an elephant's eye". Such rank growth means that the energies are going into the plant rather than the furit which normally would be ready for gathering, but which is no where near ready at this late date. Cotton picking started August 14th last year. I'm afraid it will be the 1st of September this year, and the whole business is likely to be of short duration.

But all this dampness has in no way diminished the activities of "So-say-shun". I passed that way yesterday momentarily. The church was gaily decorated for the occasion. Lace Curtains, - of all things, graced each window, and its or their newly starched stiffness was augmented by the beautifully is somewhat gaudy deep blue crepe paper festoons than swirled about all the openings and twined across the front of the pulpit and depended from the rafters. It was about 10 a.m., and already the ladies were busy frying fish and chicken outside, and the gentlemen were loitering about, talking much and laughing plentifully, in double anticipation of impending festivities and food.

Later in the morning, while at the post office, a delegation arrived, to ask me if I would speak to the "So-say-shun" on Friday, selecting as I might, both the subject to be exhausted and the time as it might please me. I don't know how today's program here will work out, and so I cannot say if I will accept their invitation or not. But I shall always appreciate their gesture of good will in this direction.

Your letter was the only one arriving in the post, as I discovered, following the departure of the delegation. There was an unposted letter, however, from the Mazurettes, asking me to come by Little River Farm and break bread with them. I think I shall not make it on Sunday, but may have a go at it during the coming week, - what with the assurance of a full moon and the promise of Revival meetings being held at St. Augustine's on Little River, during the week, too.

1306

At this point, I can't resist making one of my
inimitable maps showing the relation between Cane and Little
River and the several Churches, which you will note herewith:

1305

Saint
Mathew's

Little River Farm

St. Mary's

Arenbourg

MELROSE

St.
Augustine's.

to
St. Augustine's

Now that you are consumed with jealousy over my
cartographic accomplishments, - all of which must make
this Church location just as clear as mud, I shall
leave it alone for this sitting.

I was frankly enchanted with your letter, and
delighted, of course, that the week end offered a respite
from the usual hubbub. How good it must have been to drink in
some of the grandeur at the Metropolitan. After an absence
of several years from the place, I am a little startled when
I begin cataloging what I would like to visit first when in
that area again. Two or three paintings of no great pretension,
those couple of 18th century rooms on the first floor, - to
the right of the entrance, some where off in the direction of
the Egyptian Department, the Pompeian patio and one or two
late 18th early 19th items on the floor just up ther
stairs there by the entrance to the patio. These seem to be
the things I want to do first, - sandwiching in the basement restau-
rant in between, - to absorb a sandwich of food and to absorb
some art stuff in my mind while slowly sipping a cup of tea. I
have long felt that the restaurant in a museum was about the
best individual addition that was ever made, and following that,
I think a restful summer house where cold drinks and hot coffee
are served, would enchant the peace and restful ness of many
a cemetery. I have long wanted to institute such a business
in the Matchez cemetery, for as everywhere else, some attempt is
made at keeping a cemetery pretty, but no provision is made
for anything but the eye of the visitor to the city of the
dead. And for me, I can commune with the departed and spend
much more time among their headstones, if a place were available
where I could retire from the heat of the summer and cold of the
winter, refreshing myself the while, as I contemplated a lot of
names and particulars which I had encountered on my preliminary
tour and which I would investigate further, were it possible
for me to refresh the inner man momentarily.

I shall be so interested in learning how your patient
is making it and how you are making a go of the several
demands upon your time and energy. Both for his sake and
yours, I am hoping the ordeal may not be long, and that
you may not use up the reserve energy which you built up while
sojourning in the Mt. Madison area.

During this time of pressure, I pray you not to
attempt correspondence, for it is ever so much better that
you conserve every moment for the demands that are bound
to be made upon you. You know I will always understand.....

1307

8031

Sunday, August 19th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

As a matter of convenience, I shall refer to the enclosure first off. After all, it vaguely suggests business, - or an absence of it, - and it is always nice to get business over and out of the way first.

For the most part, I find the letter good, - not only for its friendly spirit but also for the report on the sale of some of Clemence's items.

On the other hand, I regret Miss Ramsey's continued illness. Also, and added to the illness, I regret the somewhat uncertain timing of the next visit to Cane River, and, - or do I imagine it, - the feeling that her visit will not be alone.

The artist and the negro, - and very often they are the same thing, always require infinite patience on the part of people geared differently, so far as any element of timing goes. I wanted pictures of last week's "So-say-shun" and the preceeding week's baptisin' and this week's revival services, - none of which we are to get so far as this year is concerned. But also I wanted a recording made of the picking and ginning of the cotton, - and cotton isn't ready as yet, so in sacrificing religion, the promise is held out for industry.

October will do fully as well if not better than August for the pictures of The Little Mansions. October is still in the offing. For my business, and for my methods of working, I can do better with one bag on my hands for that business than two. Somehow I gather that I may have to re-adjust my methods, however, and work at the matter with two, rather than one. In the Natchez area where the social angle enters into a lot of undertakings, - at least the way I handle it, I can readily secure all kinds of invitations for two people. But I am unaccustomed to getting cars for three. Perhaps it will do me good to have to try my hand at that.

Confidentially, too, I am wondering if up to now the photographic work may not have been done in a large part by Miss Ramsey and if the text hasn't received a lot of attention from la Baldwin. This is just a hunch, and probably has no foundation for such an assumption. Still, I am wondering, and if so, would I do better to encompass my communications on the latter point with la Baldwin rather than exclusively with la Ramsey.

Well, all these things are merely speculations, and they don't matter much, - and I can easily re-adjust myself to meet any such requirements. It was interesting in the letter that from the absence of any reference to it, the manuscript on Cane River which I had mailed a couple of weeks ago to Marshall, had not come to hand. Perhaps it wasn't forwarded to Waco. I

1308

have asked about that.

Well, that is all I have to say on such points for the moment, and now I shall get on with something else.

"So-say-shun" was a great success. The days were hot, as they should have been. The nights were soft and warm, with an ample moon, shedding just enough light to make the lights, shining through the church windows seem entirely artificial and unnecessary, with something of the same quality that the R.A. building used to have at 5 o'clock in the winter time, when viewed from 48th street, the whole gray mass of masonry, pin-pointed with golden windows, looked ever so much like a canvas of gigantic proportions, stretched against the pale blue back drop of the northern sky. I always felt that sometime some stage hand would inadvertently stumble against the thing and that you would see wave after wave ripple from the base to the top, as the thing vibrated in the air. That's the way St. Mathew's setting seemed, but ~~xxxx~~ horizontally and not vertically, - and in a dusky, softer glow.

From within the church seeped the sound of muffled voices and the swell of singing, mixing marvelously with the sounds of talk and laughter of those on the outside, sauntering about or chatting in knots about the little booths where fried fish, fried chicken, coffee and Coca-Cola was vied with elegant hamburgers, reinforced with generous slabs of onions and "chow-chow" and supplemented with such drinks as "coolie" and fruit based concoctions. Beer and whiskey found its customers away in the shadows, but that was bootleg stuff and not generally patronized saved by the more robust and rowdy. Children, forever on the move, labyrinthed their sycrifying ways about automobiles parked in any old fashions, never shouting but always making subdued little calls that melted into the general tenor of other and more mature but equally velvety tones. On occasion, when playing the Reading Machine, I have caught myself paying not the slightest attention to the content of the book being read but merely being soothed by the smooth voice that has been reading it. Even so, at St. Mathew's, even the occasional harsh or pathetic sentences that one caught passing by in the dark seemed of value, not for their meaning but for their quality of voice, - harsh things, such as: "Man you cut my tires, and I bust you mouth" or "Come on Junior, mama say pap's drunk and us-es got to help him home."

And somehow all this mixture of emotions and money making and food dispensing and pursuit of religion and love and appetite, seems to be about the same nicety of balance that I thought the whole world needs, a feeling I experienced so strongly this morning after hearing the program substituted for Invitation to Learning. If you had the good fortune to be tuned in, I have no doubt you also felt that too much have we all tended to put everything in life into separate brackets, - learning, living, science, education, religion and so on. From what the gentlemen on the air said, I never felt so much how we would do well to wrap them all together, recognizing science as a hand maiden and helper and at the same time part and parcel of all the other pursuits, which, if kept together, and utilized by all, might serve all magnificently, and yet if each were kept pigeon holed, and separate, the individual and the universe might well fall apart.

1309

Well, I certainly have been carrying on way beyond anything I realized until the end of the page called it to my attention, and so I shall turn to something else.

I think I may or may not have remarked that they have big old machines, - bull-dozers, or some such word they are called, - working on the new road being constructed across Melrose to Little River. The road was about to be started in April when the floods forced these monsters to flee. Now they are back again, and after finishing this road, it is said they will do some ditch and canal digging on Bill Jones' plantation and other properties near here.

And the reason I mention all this is the fact that in talking to one of the men in charge of these vast machines, I learned that I might be able to borrow one a little later, if I need one.

What I have in mind is to straighten the terrace at Arenbourg where the floods this Spring ate in a little. By driving posts in a straight line along the margin of the river, I can cover them with boards to form a straight line parallel to the terrace. With the aid of the bulldozer a foot or two of top soil on the terrace can be pushed into these empty spaces. Not only will this give formality to the edge of the terrace, but at the same time it will offer an opportunity to create a lower level, between the sight of the maison de la reine and Uncle Dore-stone's, effectively eliminating the chance of any rain ater ever collecting near the house, and at the same time giving a very pleasant variation in the formal lines of the terrace itself.

I should much like to measure out the terrace, just to see how much soil may thus be removed, but with the time running short before the cotton crop is harvested, I think I would do well to stay away from Arenbourg, lest the Peter Metoyers become suspicious that they are going to have to move, and so cut a few trees along the bank for fire wood, etc.

But there will be ample time for these little investigations, and it is pleasant to think that the big old machines, currently employed for road making, can be pressed into service to do a little chore that may be classed under the title of Gardening.

Of course the Melrose tractors can stir up the road leading into the place, and attend to a hundred little minor jobs, but the importance of the road thing, - the machine, I mean, is the fact that it has this gigantic power to get behind a mountain of dirt and push it any old place, which, in this instance, will be right up to the brink of the terrace itself.

Miss Kate left Saturday. Today we are alone, save for the family. Tomorrow Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Pattison will be up the road at Frenchies Camp, - which adjoins St. Mathew's, and so I reckon they will be at Melrose quite a bit.

I am going to pray the ladies to pass by here on evening, while I take that opportunity to mount my charger and have supper with Charles and Ida Mazurette on Little River Farm, - returning to St. Augustine's Church for a revival meeting along about first moon light, and thence home about midnight through the pecane groves between here and Little River Bridge.

This is certainly a hodge-podge letter, but you will over-look it, I hope. And please just dispose of the Waco number, as I have no need for it.....

I reckon about Wednesday or Thursday will see me returning home by the midnight moon. I shall be alone, and yet, on second thought, I can't say that I shall be, not quite.....

3181

1311

August 21st, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To hand a fine report, and I am conscious of having skipped reference to the receipt of some communications and enclosures, - all of which have meant so much to me, but some of which I have neglected to mention specifically. I reckon my failure must in part be due not so much to my lack of appreciation as to the fact that sometimes my acknowledgements are made between interruptions, so that things I have in mind to mention are sometimes passed over under the assumption that I have already touched upon them in a foregoing paragraph, whereas in reality they have merely "crossed my mind" as Clemence would say, and have not been really spoken of. And speaking of Clemence reminds me that the clipping covering the Waco Show came to hand nicely, as did the acknowledgement of the photos, and I am glad that you enjoyed all so much.

Your reference to the architectural construction, as revealed in the photograph of Mr. Brew and me on the front gallery really struck me as remarkable, - the evidence that nothing escaped your notice. The upright beams you mention, as you have already guessed, are placed along at interval, and between these uprights the mud is chunked in, forming the insulating quality which tends to keep this type of house so warm in the winter and cool in the summer. It is interesting that more and more this type of construction is being employed by contemporary building tendencies, and although somewhat varied in its application, many a new home in the Texas area especially is or are incorporating these principles.

Mesdames Rand and Pattison came to Cane River on schedule yesterday. After the Madam folded up last night, I put on my boots, for earlier it had rained heavily, and walked the Bermuda Road for 3 miles to call on them. They are located just beyond the fence separating Frankie's camp from St. Mathew's Church. I took along the Children of Strangers article, and Mrs. Pattison read it and helped me fill in a couple of places where interruptions had made some sentences a little jumbled.

They were kind enough to offer to drive me back home, but I declined, preferring to navigate under my own steam, for the skies had cleared and a big old moon was doing a great business. I was glad to be alone, too because I was able to make use of the quiet to give some thought to what I would have to say tonight when I shall be asked to speak at the revival meeting on Little River.

I shall mount my horse at 3 this afternoon and head out toward Little River. While crossing Melrose, I shall stop and talk with the bulldozer crew, and discuss the matter of the terrace at Arenbourg. From there, I shall go on to Little River, stopping to talk a little with some of my friends occupying cabins in the neighborhood of St. Mary's and St. Augustine's houses of worship. That will give me

1181

1312

a line on how things went off on Sunday and Monday nights, and so give me a chance to adjust my own sermon the better.

I should be at Little River Farm about 5, where I shall dine with Charles and Ida, returning along the moss draped river road about first dark. Then for the revival service, and after the formal meeting, quite a lot of talk, and thence back across the canals and ditches and through the pecane groves to Melrose by midnight. Only you can guess where my thoughts will be during this fairly active day.

It was good to learn that your patient has made such a successful demonstration of his remarkable physical prowess. Although you did not mention it a second time, I constantly found myself smiling to think of his satisfaction in being possessed at this time of his "concession to beauty", and I am sure his recuperation will be the more speedy because of your thoughtfulness in providing him with what was so upper most in his mind when he left for Lennox Hill.

My patient seems to improve apace, - physically, and there is talk of greater improvement in the Department of Spirits, too, although I seem to be the only one as yet who knows about it. Yesterday Dr. Wenk and his wife spent the day in Shreveport, - 100 miles away. It is said they plan to quit Cloutiersville for Shreveport shortly, selling their home in this area and setting up shop up yonder. Thanks the Lord for such a move. Surely they can't come this way so frequently if that move is effected. The only fly in the ointment will be the fact that when they do make a round they will probably stay longer. In one way it seems to me that they feel they have about milked the cow dry, that they have obtained about everything they can out of the well rom which they have drawn so constantly, and with that source about exhausted, they have no qualms about moving away until death shall provide a final settlement of the estate from which they hope to extract one final share. This interpretation may be all wrong, but it is about the only way I can explain to myself just how their present mental processes are working.

You are so good as to offer to undertake a service in regard to the Reading Machine. I appreciate your thoughtfulness, so generous and so in line with everything else emanating from your direction. The thing is handled through Baton Rouge, however, and will be repaired in New York for that office and returned there for a re-check, whereupon la Culver, - and we haven't heard from her in so long, - has offered to pick it up and bring it here, so as to avoid the infernal banging it would get, were it to travel via Express.

From the enclosed card from Caroline Dormon, I notice she has misunderstood something Robina must have written, for certainly the Madam hasn't pushed a pen in two or three months. The Dormons appear to be a little droopy, as usual, but they revive as readily as they slump, so they might be blowing in this place today, and not even be surprised at finding themselves here. I must skip along at this point. Your report was so heartening as all your reports are, and somehow I shall feel the closer companionship tonight, as I cross the moonlit pecanes groves, - thanks to them...

Church Service
at St. Augustine's

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August 23rd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Yesterday was one of those days in which a million little non important things kept cropping up to keep me from doing anything by way of correspondence, and the same thing has started today, althou though I am determined to dash off a line, even though it be entirely unsatisfactory.

Tuesday night was perfect. I arrived at Little River Farm a little after five and supped ever so pleasantly with Charles and Ida, with lots of good conversation on the gallery, immediately following. Tall glasses of ice tea did a lot to put just the proper temperature and feeling of friendship about the place. It was truly a very pleasant literary evening, and what with the extreme remoteness of its setting, it was doubly precious.

Along about first dark, I re-mounted my charger, and headed up the Little River road. The Western sky, through a black screen of woods on the opposite bank, was amethyst, while overhead and through the gray banners of Spanish moss the pearl gray sky held pin points of gold where more daring stars were already giving contrast to a deepening wash of blue.

In the half light-half dark along the road, I passed one or two friends on foot, - sometimes a couple of men who had been fixing the foundations on St. Mary's, - then a man and a woman, firewood in hand, returning from some chores in the woods, and heading toward a belated supper in their cabin somewhere off on a side road.

At first arriving at St. Augustine's, I thought I had arrived too soon. But as I dismounted, two little boys, possible 12 or 14, came out of the shadows from nowhere and asked if they might tie my horse to the fence. They could. They were both wearing hats, which seemed nice because unnecessary, and white starched linen coats. They said they had come to open the church doors and to ring the bell. Would I like to see how that was done and would I like to see the church, newly arranged, "before the Reverend Gillis and the other folks come". I would.

And so we rang the bell and it sounded so loud in that quiet peaceful setting. And then we walked from the belfry at the church doors toward the pulpit at the rear. Marvelous pools of

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moonlight, streaming through the transparent panes, made marvelous and curious patterns as it fell aslant the pews and spilled over onto the floor. We lighted the kerosene lamp, and looked about the place. It looked nice, - plain, unpainted wood, a little different from when the church was larger, as it was at high water in April, when three cows died on the altar.

Pretty soon people began arriving. First some children appeared. They greeted me by name, although I must confess I did not recognize them. Soon some ladies appeared, the first in a big polka dot dress, it seemed pale green and white, and on her feet she wore nothing. It was charming. Then another big Aunt Jemima in a mightily starched skirt. I gasped a little from time to time as she stood by the gate and exchanged observations on life, for intermittently she would relieve her mouth, filled with snuff, by turning her head and spitting in the dark. I was so fearful with each "spit" that the stiffly starched skirt might suffer, but I reckon long experience on the part of the expectorator guaranteed safety for the garment.

After awhile more people arrived and then "The Reverend" himself.

By this time we had all chatted about a whole variety of things but mostly about the beauty of the night which was really almost too much like a Gustave More or an Audrey Beardsely to be believable.

Services started shortly. The singing was good, the doings of the Reverend was elegant, - colorful, withal and filled with lots of feeling; based on inflection of voice more than profundity of thought. Eventually there was some thought given to the Lord's prayer. It had occurred to me that that marvelous composition begins with - not your Father, not my father, - but regardless of situation, - "Our Father", and that seemed to please everyone.

By ten thirty the services were over. The Church lamp was extinguished, the moon took over. No one was intent on rushing off, just as though there would be no tomorrow too soon. And half thinking, half dreaming, we talked nonsense as everybody drank in the new seen that the moon had created, as opposed to the pleasant enough picture so well known to everyone in the day.

It was midnight when I got back to Melrose. A couple of dogs were under my house, barking at a pole cat. They kept it up all night, and I was glad, because after a hot bath I was sleepy, but I wanted to keep awake to further my memories of the evening just past. And so even though I dozed from time to time, the racket underneath my bedroom floor was sufficient to waken me from time to time, and I revelled in pleasant thoughts of how wonderful was the immediate date, and how doubly so when it could be deliciously shared.....

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August 24th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To hand your splendid report, and my thanks for all particulars.

In the case of your patient, I am so sorry that his situation is not moving along so successfully. If not already, he may eventually sink to lower levels, I fear. Sometimes the will power can accomplish such wonderful recuperations that one is quite unable to predict anything in regard to such personalities. I must say quite frankly, however, that in the past, I have often remarked that the worst patients in the world are those whose health has always been good. Just as transplanting some types of trees gives them additional strength, so an occasional illness in the individual seems to give me power to resist serious illness to a greater degree than one who has never known a sick day. I am not sure if your patient is in the latter class, but somehow I feel he is one who has always enjoyed comparatively good health. That is the case with mine, and in consequence, any severe illness seems to topple her over much more completely than would one who somehow over the years had built up resistance to the minor shocks of secondary illnesses, and so be able to resist the major ones when they appear.

From the present appearance of things at this point, it would seem that Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Pattison will return to Alexandria on Sunday, putting things in order in that place during the following week, and then return here about September 4th or 5th, picking up my patient and whisking her away to Hot Springs for two or three weeks. I am hoping this may be accomplished, for it would be of the greatest benefit to all, but I consider (consider) the whole thing as merely a possibility. At the moment, it appears assured, but until it is an actuality, it is fraught with all kinds of disappointments.

Did I mention in a recent report that the Wenks have rented an office in Shreveport, as from January 1st, 1946, and that they are currently engaged in searching for a home in that city while offering their Cloutierville menage for sale. It goes without saying that everyone in these parts is enchanted at the move, and the only regret is that it could not be to a greater distance.

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Yesterday was a full-up day in the pilgrim department and I accomplished very little otherwise than keeping things moving along socially, and so setting aside my own work on this machine until well after the full moon had risen. Just about mail time, - and I had been busy as a bee up until then, - Dr. and Mrs. Knipmayer called. I greeted them, and turned them over to the Madam, while I established contact between the Alexandria ladies and Paynie, and then turned to a Captain Landry, living on the river in a camp. He had a half dozen ribs shaved off, a lung removed and heaven knows what else, - and among other things he is unable to sit, being forced to either stand or lie down.

Following those unimportant but time-taking contacts, a group of ladies came from Alexandria to call with la Rand and la Pattison, and I thought to afford the Madam some rest by undertaking a tour of Ile Brevelle, - Geline's, the Francois Robieux house, the old Narcisse Prudhomme place, etc., and so back to the camp, where la Rand and la P. found that rs. Rand's daughter had arrived with a child or two, and her son, - in the Army, had driven in with a youth, - one John Morris, of Morristown, N. A., who was touring, and thence did I institute another tour, so that young Mr. Rand could call on the Madam while I did a tour for the rest, - concentrating on "elrose."

Thank heavens that today, - I think, I hope, may be devoted exclusively to some writing, for following some work last night, I took a long, long walk, and stirred up half a dozen ideas I want to get down on paper.

While returning home, along about mid night, I passed by sleeping Arenbourg. I thought of your question regarding the possibility of butterfly lilies there. There will be billions. And as I contemplated the layout, across the cotton patch between me and the river, it somehow seemed as though every stalk somehow transformed itself into a new order and great clusters of fragrant white flowers unfolded at the top of every stalk. Butterfly lilies will do very well at Arenbourg, there are plenty of places for them, and we shall make the most of the situation. - a few bulbs, a few gardenias, a few japonicas, a billion butterfly lilies, - and all the rest of the flower kingdom can just push in and find space for its individual members, - but not at the expenses of those others whose priority is assured, don't you think?

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August 28th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Friday until Tuesday, - I believe that is the break in this correspondence. It is good to be within reach of a typewriter again, and so feel the additional flow of thought.

Just before noon on Friday, a telephone from the Crescent City announced that Old Man River would arrive here at 8 p.m. He arrived at 10:30, being a passenger in Mrs. Spofford's car, the lady who lives in New Orleans, heading on the next morning for Shreveport, where her husband maintains their home, although the wife for years has works in New Orleans.

Such an advent, of course, makes understandable the sudden gap in reports.

As for the gentleman, he presented a remarkable appearance, - looking stronger and healthier than he did 5 or 6 years ago, - steady on his feet, disdainful of liquor and manifesting a desire for food that was astonishing. He walks with steady stride and appears to be possessed of all his former faculties. And just to think that last mid-June he was such a wreck. I make no explanation of it is remarkable transformation, for I understand it not at all.

The most striking thing he did on his departure Monday afternoon, - the lady returning this way from Shreveport to New Orleans, was to pack up a number of his most prized possessions, decanters, statues, glassware, etc., and this gesture means, I assume, that so far as he is concerned, Melrose is less and less a possibility as a future abode.

The week end was quite busy, with the Madam's health a negligible factor in the whole hurly-burly, since she continues to divide her time between bed and sofa. Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Pattison spent much of Saturday here, and Lyle read to them and otherwise entertained. Cliff Byrd and Guy Walters came down from Shreveport, and with this assortment, the Cloutierville family came by, - both Saturday and Sunday, as did four of Miss Robina's friends from Shreveport, who, - lo! - brought Miss Robina with them. The latter group arrived after Cloutierville had left and their visit was not long. It was good to see Miss Robina again, - at least it was good for me, but the Madam has complained ever since her departure about how disagreeable she always was to Sister in the years gone by. I take it as a matter of course that so far as that friendship of years standing may not be set down as completely worthless and probably never to be resumed, - unless our patient's attitude is greatly altered shortly. I shall make no further effort to

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keep the ground well ploughed in order that the seeds may re-germinate. If three or four years of effort has terminated in nothing but criticism and complaint, then obviously I have had very little success in trying to kee alive something that wa of the greatest value to the Madam, I think.

As for the Madam herself, she is scheduled to leave here on Tuesday, September (interruption), - Tuesday, September 4th, for Hot Springs.

Because of their friendship, Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Pattison, - and especially Mrs. Rand, have arranged to go with her to spend about 21 days with her, in hopes that the change may accomplish what staying at home has not. I think it very noble of them, and withal quite an undertaking, without much promise of pleasure for this three week jaunt from Rio came a letter, - handwritten, from the boy friend. There wasn't so much of it that could be deciphered, it was so characteristically scrawled. I do gather, however, that on the 1st of September he will leave for the Embassy in Chile where he will remain for a number of months, at least, awaiting, I assume, the results of elections at home which will do much to determine where next he may be located. There was some news of old friends whom he saw once more after his recent visit there, but the thing was so miserably penned that no one, - and several tried, could make out much of the particulars. I shall respond my requesting that a typewriter be employed in future communications, if any.

He seemed worried for fear his furniture might be causing inconvenience as a storage item. I shall set him at rest on that point. As soon as there is a place for it in Arenbourg, I shall move it there, for it will serve in a utilitarian capacity, and ultimate return of it to its owner will be the more readily accomplished if handled from that place.

The unexpected arrival of old man river, throwing me beyond the reach of this machine, has of course stalled all communications, and so I must knock off a letter to Betty Smedley immediately, relative to the Clemence Shaw in Austin, and elsewhere in Texas, under the auspice of the Texas Garden Club. I had threatened to forward such a letter to James, for re-mailing, in order that he might enclose publicity, and since I have failed to do this, I suppose old Oklahoma must be full of wonder in the sudden halt of communications.

It hasn't rained at Malrose for two days, and what with a good sun during that period, the cotton, I imagine, is opening nicely. According to the radio this morning, however, a big wind is headed this way from Houston, where 9 inches of rain fell within a few hours. As I recall, an inch of rain is equal to 60 tons to the acre, - and while, after saying that, I still don't know precisely how much that is, - still, were it to fall on Arenbourg, I reckon it would be sufficient for us to get out our parasols and sandles.

On the morrow, I shall refer to subjects mentioned above but in greater detail. I just want to get this going by air mail to let you know that nothing particularly atomic has interrupted the usual communications.....

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August 29th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It certainly is good to be within reach of the typewriter again, for that means an uninterrupted flow of thought and feeling.

There is one bad feature about giving a summary of events covering several days, and that is because on succeeding days, when one has in mind to elaborate on certain points, one forgets what has been remarked upon in the first brief sketch, and so is likely to repeat too much. But I shall hazard a chance.

First off, I assume I may have mentioned that old man river took most of his belongings from here, save some books, some pictures and some papers. I suppose these will go next.

I may have mentioned that he brought three or four chapters with him from the book on which he is supposed to be currently at work. I believe these were the chapters he mentioned during his former visit. He read them to Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Pattison. He read them to Miss Robina. He read them to the Madam. He read them to me. Everyone seemed to agree that they lacked his old time punch. They seemed to me and to others to have much to much about the services rendered him by his servant: - "And so Joe, having put oe into my shoes and overcoat", "and so Joe, having put me into my socks", and "so Joe having fixed my tie", etc., etc. Then, too, in one chapter there seemed to be two stories, entirely unrelated, beginning with one tale, breaking off in the middle to tell another full story, and thence back to finish up the first.

He remarked to Miss Robina that although his body has slumped, he was now back on his feet alright, and "thank God, my mind was never effected". Well, as Fred Allen is want to remark: "That is a matter of opinion. Of course only the future will tell if the reformation is complete, and in the event that it is, if there is enough left of creative vigor to enable him to do anything. After this past week and his greatly altered improvement, - or rather his greatly altered appearance, in the right direction, I should be surprised at nothing.

With the departure of all the guests on Monday, Tuesday dawned with new ones arriving, - Stephen Garrent, the Madam's brother, coming up from New Roads to spend a day or two.

Yesterday's post brought letters from Mrs. Pattison, saying that all plans are in order for her arrival with Mrs. Rand this coming Monday evening, whereupon, after spending the night, the three ladies

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will take off for Hot Springs. So be it.

There was a letter from Miss Robina. I enclose it herewith, although the Madam had torn it in two.

The Times Picayune carried an account of a murder near Baton Rouge of an elderly lady, - a Mrs. Cheatham Stanley, whom the Madam and Lyle had known quite well. I never knew her. It seems to be something of a mystery in the thing, but it is not likely to be any Goat Castle thing, since the reason that was so remarkable, - aside from the unsolved mystery, was what it revealed by way of curious ways of life in a place frequently mentioned as "The Heart of the Old South".

I must eventually get off a letter to Miss Ramsey or Miss Baldwin, - or both, and I know not where to send Miss Ramsey's, since I am still uncertain if she is in Waco or Marshall. I have heard nothing since the letter from Mrs. Baldwin which was forwarded to you some time back. Some of those people must have had ancestors living in Wachez, since no one in that place seems to do much about correspondence. I am wondering what has happened to Mary Rhodes, for her letters seem to be out of circulation, too.

Having been so closely tied down with guests, I have lost all contact with what goes on in the cabins. It is rumored that one or two people are starting to pick cotton, although the continued sprinkles and damps hold off development of the staple and the gin will probably not be in full operation for another ten days or two weeks.

I did hear last evening that St. Augustine's (on Little River) plans an anniversary session beginning about September 13th, - a Thursday, and reaching its high point and conclusion on Sunday September 16th. There will be much sermonizing, etc., and possibly a modest baptizing thrown in. I must pass this news along to Waco and Marshall, just in hopes! If I read my calendar correctly, a new moon blossoms forth about that time, and should the bulldozer keep dry, the new road to little river should make communication with that place easy. As I write these lines, it occurs to me that among other "must" photographs on Miss Ramsey's next round should be a close up study of a negro laughing, in close proximity to a very light mulatto. That illustration would the better illustrate the magazine article and the Cane River book.

It was noble of you to discover the shrimp article and to share it with me. I have been glad to see the pictures, and I am hoping soon to get someone to read it to me. There are so many things to be undertaken. It also occurs to me that with Hot Springs to extend as from the 4th to about the 25th, it would be a good time to have a guest or two, - especially the photographic department, wherein there would be no demands for entertaining the usual hostess. Thanks again for all the nice things that come this way and on the morrow, I shall be back.....

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Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To hand your nice letter, and my thanks on no end of counts.

I would especially express my appreciation to you for having taken time out to pass along the problems as revealed by the article concerning the Indianapolis Community, wherein some effort, - and apparently with grand intention and a measure of success, is being carried out. My reader was called away just at the time we had concluded the report, so I am as yet denied the pleasure of reading the clippings about Mr. Kane.

Now that the war is over and unemployment will begin to be felt all over the country, this matter of racial relations will most certainly come to the fore with a bang. The murder of Mrs. Cheatham Stanley near Baton Rouge, which I mentioned yesterday, has been solved, according to the papers. They say a 17 year old negro has confessed. I hope it is not another Goat Castle business, wherein the only person ever convicted was an old negress who couldn't have possibly been present. But the Baton Rouge murder is just all that is needed to get the K. K. K. going strong. It was my understanding, last January when there, that already cells of the Klan were functioning. This episode should be enough to get thousands of members, and it will be difficult going until that hocus-pokus gets smashed.

Sometimes I think how amusing one aspect of the Klu Klux Klan is in Louisiana, since they always declare they are primarily after the Jews, the Catholics and the Negroes. After all, you ride on Louisiana of those three elements and there wouldn't be much for the Knights of the Night Shirt to work on. And then on Cane River, there are some poor creatures who could be subject to the hatred of the K. K. Ks. on all three counts. Hymen Cohen, who lived down the river and some of the Friedmans, living up the river, have at times begotten mulatto children who have subsequently joined the Catholic Church of St. Augustin. That of course makes them both Jewish and negroid and Catholic to boot. What a frolic those K. K.K.s could have in such a set up.

After remarking in yesterday's letter that we hadn't heard from Mary in so long, it was coincidental that a letter should have come to hand in the succeeding post. It isn't especially interesting, but I send it along regardless. I do not want it back.

..... (over)

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How well do I recall the number of times Lyle promised to go to Natchez, - ever since 1929, and never did quite arrive. I think Mary is beginning to be justified in putting me in the same class, - I have scouted the possibility of coming so often and so often failed.

I thought her reference to Edith Wyatt Moore, - "the little Corporal", was quite good. Frankly I had never thought of the oddness of a honeymooning couple receiving a telegram, announcing the birth of a grandchild. That is rather amusing.

Isn't it strange that Ferriday should have remained on the water wagon so long, - 3 months, did she say? I mean to say that it is remarkable that both Roane's problem child and ours should have gone sober on us at the same time. I must also confess that I am not at all sure, so far as getting along with such a person is concerned, that the change is for the best, so far as their social sense goes.

You will recall, I think, - getting back to Mary's reference to la Moore, that the wife of Col. Lawrence was burned to death in a fire in her garden in Baton Rouge last Spring. The beach Master to whom she refers, of course, is Pierce.

In your letter, you say that your patient continues to live, - a fact which I think very remarkable, for I had thought he might not make it. But since my own problem child folled me, - as from June to August, in recuperative powers, - not to mention sobriety, I have given up all thought of predicting.

I am glad you are going to master the horseless carriage in ten easy lessons. I am sure you will do so, and I am perfectly delighted that you are undertaking it. Only please take the ten easy lessons with a sympathetic soul, since otherwise it might lead to nothing so much as confusion. It is a splendid idea, and should you not do more than graduate at this time, I offer some post graduate courses when Arenbourg is established. It will be good to know how to operate those machines, and while I haven't touched one in ever so long, I sometimes think I should do a little driving just to keep my hand in. In these remote roads, I couldn't possibly bang into anything, and I can see well enough in going slowly to get around x perfectly well.

I saw Clemence for a moment yesterday. She tells me she has done a nice picture of two old ladies, one carding wool, the other spinning. I must get down to see that. She says Mary Frances has done something pretty, too, "a big old black boy settin' in a heap of cotton with a cow a-lookin' at him". I certainly want to get at that one too.

Must skip for now. Thanks again for the nice, nice report. And don't force yourself to take pen in hand when so many demands are upon you and ten easy lessons are in the offing.....

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August 31st, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service: -

Weather reports at best are dull, but I must remark that yesterday, being phenomenal, was one of all blue sky and gradually tempering sunshine, for the white heat of full summer is diminishing into a golden glory of advancing autumn.

The Madam was woozy all day, having taken both Barbital and Codeine during the night, and the after effects of the former always seem to linger long.

In the afternoon I learned that my friend, Bill Jones, was laid up at home, having cut himself an eight inch gash on the leg on some tin at the lumber company in town. Bill, and his two brothers, Nolan and Randolph, are the richest people of color on the river, their several holdings representing about a third of a million or better.

Randolph spoke to me in the store, and told me of Bill's accident, and when I expressed a wish to see him, Randolph immediately offered transportation facilities.

I was glad I went, for not only was it good to call on Bill, but I was fortunate in arriving just as Dr. Johnston, colored, of Natchitoches, was dressing the wound. I staid perhaps half an hour, perhaps an hour, and I learned much from Dr. Johnston, and on inviting him to come and call on me, he expressed himself as pleased with the possibility of exchanging ideas with me.

Dr. Johnston has a sense of humor and gives the impression of being a thorough and honest physician. Some time back, so I was told by someone or other, Dr. Johnston was summoned to a home to which he responded without delay. On arriving, he found that his patient, - or would be patient, was white. Without delay he expressed himself as appreciative that he had been called, but said that he felt it better if the patient were served by a white doctor.

In this decision, it seems to me, he should wisdom. I do not know the white people who called him, but unless they were people of quality, Dr. Johnston would run the risk of being cursed, should the patient no respond readily to his treatment.

(over)

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As for myself, I think I would have the greatest confidence in him, were I in need of a physician. I have a feeling, too, - after yesterday's purely social contact, that were I to summon him professionally, he would respond. I hope, of course, I may not have need of a physician's services, but in case I do, I think I shall keep Dr. J. in mind.

Another subject, which isn't especially interesting, I reckon, but which I have talked a lot about of late with the Madam's brother, Stephen Garret, is Brahmin (?) cattle, - the ones with a hump on the back, and nurtured in India as sacred. It seems Mr. Garret has quite a flock of them. We have some, and the negroes are terrified by their appearance. One young bull on Melrose is affectionately known as George. George is as friendly as a kitten, but fortunately not quite so playful. Whenever George gets out of the pasture and comes wandering down the road, he always gallops toward me at first sight, and if there happens to be negroes about, - especially ladies, they hoop and scream and fly for the tall timbers as fast as they can jump. But George merely wants his head stroked and someone to talk to him, and I always enjoy the contact with such a friendly animal.

1853 was the year these sacred cows and bulls were first introduced into the United States. It is an easy date to remember. Yellow Fever was most devastating in 1853, and 1853 was the year Admiral Peary opened up Japan, his flagship being named, of all things, - The Mississippi.

Mr. Garret tells me of a German family, - possibly one generation or two from Germany who came to Texas in the mid 1800's, and by one means or another, introduced quite a number of Brahmins into the Lone Star state. The family name, I believe, was Bunge (2 syllables) and the sons of the old man are still very successfully operating the cattle business, heavily intermingling Brahmin strains with other varieties. These animals, it is said, do very poorly in the North, but thanks to the similarity of Louisiana-Texas climate to the home land of India, they seem to thrive here, and it is said that in Texas, Brazil and the Argentine, one finds better specimens than in India, although that statement is made without considering the fine breeds which are nurtured by the Princes of India who are said to have wonderful animals of this type.

I was interested to learn how the first Brahmins were introduced into the United States. It seems that when the industrial revolution got under way in England, the British Government sent a couple of prominent men, - of the nobility, I believe, to Louisiana to study the culture of cotton, what with the view to introducing vast mills in England to convert the staple into cloth.

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By some chance, these two men came to Feliciana, - St. Francisville, I believe, and were entertained during their prolonged stay by one of the Barrows, - but I know not which one at this writing.

On their departure, they wished to give some token of their appreciation of Southern hospitality, which they had found good, but as the Barrows took their visit as a matter of course, the visitors hit upon nothing that seemed suitable to express their appreciation. Sometime after their departure, however, a gift arrived from far away India, - and thus was introduced the first Brahmins into the United States. Mr. Garret is going to send me particulars regarding the identity of the Barrow who did the entertaining and was the first to receive the sacred cows.

I think the point is interesting, and it seems to me, - should further particulars come to hand, I might find a place for that episode in the Bayou Sara picture book, should la Ramsey and I get around to do that one, after doing Cane River, St. Catherine's Creek, and so on.

I may have remarked before that I am uncertain at the present time of the spelling of Brahmin. Long before this humped back animal came to this region, the negroes had a name for perche, - or perhaps it is sunfish, and for what reason I know not, they have always called the sun fish "brims". What with that name well fixed in their vocabulary, they used it for all it was worth when Brahmins were brought into the country, and from "brim" they passed easily to "brimmers", so that now the fish and the cows are separated only by a single syllable.

Of local news, I have little. The Wenks spent yesterday in Shreveport, still looking for a house to purchase there, I believe. It is rumored that November 1st is the magical day they will set up shop in that place. It is 97 to 100 miles from here, and that is something to be thankful about.

The enclosed letter came to hand yesterday from Miss Kate Perkins. I think it is of interest only because it shows the opinion of one who has known this set up for fifty years. I do not want the letter back, so you might just throw it out.

There was some other point I was going to touch upon, but it eludes me momentarily, and so I shall let this slide along.....

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September 1st, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Today's report must of necessity be brief. A hundred little matters intervened between waking and post time, and accordingly I shall have little opportunity to say more than thanks for your perfectly elegant report that came to hand in yesterday's post. I liked it all and I loved the part regarding the sharing of Arenbourg with another in thought, when night had settled down and darkness released the feelings from the little local cares and demands.

And thanks for telling me of the Revival broadcast. I don't seem to get the station you mention, although it may be broadcast on a net work, coming through some more local station. If you should remark upon the organization which puts it on the air, - that is to say, Columbia, National or Mutual, - I might do a little fishing among the air waves to see what luck I can have.

What with all the doings around here last Sunday, I was unable to tune in on my favorite program, Invitation to Learning, - and so missed it. I appreciated your thoughtfulness in giving me some idea as to its subject matter. I see nothing from where I sit to prevent me from being alone tomorrow when this Sunday's broadcast goes on the air, and I am certainly going to do my best to get it. I certainly hope those curiously little Jpas don't take over the air waves at the time.

The two copies of Life came to hand, too, and may I say thanks for them also. Up to the present writing, I have merely had a chance to turn through them all by myself. The colored pictures of Paris look as though they might hold some interesting particulars regarding contemporary doings in that place. In the other issue, I notice pictures of Venus de Milo, the Winged Victory of Samothrace, etc., and I am going to press my reader into service on that score also.

The enclosure is of no interest, save that it indicates our friend, Miss Myra, has returned to Devereux. I am glad because it is always pleasant to think that that lovely place and its gardens are under her direct supervision.

(over)

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I am so anxious to spend a little time with her before long, for I want her to do something about establishing that place as a permanent memorial to the ante bellum planter, and to give an acre or two of land on the Liberty Road section for the establishment of a Negro Library, - housing documents and publications on that general subject.

Miss Myra is undoubtedly the most public minded person in Natchez today, and what with her elegant possessions, she might well fall in with the idea, were it properly presented, - especially by means of a gradual approach.

Should I get to Natchez sometime in October, I am afraid I shall do so only with Miss Ramsey, for it is important for us to get the pictures for The Little Mansions, and that will probably give me little opportunity to see Miss Myra alone, - which would of course be the only way to take up such a proposition. But other opportunities may present themselves, and all will come around in good time.

My tractor driving Barber is still in deep water, - and all over a couple of pints of whiskey. A negro driver of a wholesale grocery truck, coming from Matchitoches, got Jack to sell him a pint of whiskey. The driver was obviously in the pay of the local hill-billy politicians. Then, as soon as the sale was consummated, the law jumped on Jack. Since then he has been worried on and off for the past two or three months. Yesterday a Federal agent appeared, demanding that Jack buy a \$27.50 Federal license to sell whiskey, and thus avoid charges for having sold liquor without said license. Then the State agent appeared with a \$90.00 license on the same grounds.

Why there isn't more race hatred, I know not, when a negro knows perfectly well that any white man in town can go to a physician, - like the one in this family, and flim-flam all the whiskey he wants from the drug store which operates within the law in conjunction with the physician. And the negro knows, too, that all you have to do is telephone the Elks Club or any other such organization in town, and a case of liquor will be forth coming immediately. I think I shall

start a sizzling letter or two to the local paper, for it is high time that such inequities be removed. Enough dissatisfaction is afoot without adding this fat to the fire.

Must ship until the morrow.....

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September 3rd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It is obvious that I must try and round up a type-writer ribbon and some one to put it in place for me today.

My last report was written on this machine but the envelope was addressed on one in the office. I may be able to do the same thing with this one.

It was a quiet week end in these parts, - and hot.

I spent a pleasant two hours at the cabin of our little artist friend. She had some rather nice things, and I must say I am beginning to be strongly impressed by the pleasant improvement of Mary Frances' artistry. One or two items I could scarcely tell from that of her more mature associate.

Being a contemporary artist, Clemence had stirred up one that was quite up to the minute. It was of a man (looking at you), that is to say, full face, and a woman and a child on either side, and in the hand of each was a flag, held very stiffly, with the flag full blown in each case. According to Clemence: "I says they'se heard tell the war's over and they'se makin' enjoyment". I liked that.

Clemence, of course, will always be the remarkable one in that set up, what with having started off so late in her artistic expression, but Mary Frances has the makings of quite a good artist, I think, were she ever given the opportunity to bring forth her talents. I don't reckon she ever will be, although one never knows, of course. Perhaps, were Arenbourg eventually able to influence the region sufficiently, there might be something of a colony in this neighborhood which would supply instruction for just this type of artistic endeavor. I don't cultivate the Joneses for nothing, and while the Joneses are not at all inclined toward the Arts, it is quite possible that something on their broad acres might eventually unfold. Perhaps even at Helrose something might transpire. In my opinion the development of the individual Artist would be the more successful if the talents were nurtured on home ground until the expression with brush and paint were pretty firmly ingrained. Too often, I think, when an artistic nature is forced to move into unfamiliar

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settings, in order to receive training, the new surroundings prove too distracting, so that the concentration on the gift of painting somehow is dissipated while a whole flock of impressions, - too frequently not conducive to desired progression, disturbs and distracts the artist.

And in view of these thoughts, my mind wanders off toward old Rosenwald, and I cannot help wondering what in the world ever happened to la Haygood and how come she failed to respond to the invitation or two to come to Melrose. Obviously she received them, since in her letter to Mr. Pipes, she mentioned the probability that she would get down this way this summer. The calendar says that summer is just about wrapped up for this year, and still no word from Chicago. I want a school for the mulattoes, and a grant for Clemence or Mary Frances, and, aside from that, I should really like to get some first hand impressions of what the set up is in the Chicago area.

But I see I am rambling about to little point, and I reckon I would do better to break off, not only to save your own good time, but also to get on with a flock of little notes I must get into the mail this morning for the Madam, for what with her departure tomorrow, I think she has several different letters she wants to get going before she takes off.

I don't suppose there would be any especially point in writing her at Hot Springs, where she is supposed to remain for three weeks. I will say, however, that her address will be the Uplman Hotel, Hot Springs, Arkansas.

She will be with Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Pattison, and Mrs. Pattison will do any mail for her, but she says she is going to see the telephone rather than the open. Mrs. Pattison is nice but inclines toward the inquisitive, and I mention this for your own information, and I reckon my name might be omitted, were anything addressed to the Springs.

I'll do better on the morrow, I hope, unless the early morning departure prevents me from writing at all. Pat will drive the ladies, returning to Melrose immediately by bus.....

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August 4th, 1945.

emorandum to Clipping Service:

Lo! A new ribbon!

It was grand to have your nice report in yesterday's post, acknowledging in my report covering the doings of old man river and all, plus the very interesting details stemming from your general neighborhood, which I find far fetched, and yet somehow every removal of clouds somehow seems to bring the pure blue of Heaven just that much closer.

I was naturally interested that personal relations, especially between someone and Tilloah, seem to have improved. So be it. I think you are wise to let such relationship as currently exists, as between your own good self and the Tilloah set up remain where they stand. After writing thus, I realize, of course, that I might do as well by sticking to my own business, and I am persuaded that you realize I am merely letting my own reactions slip on to paper rather than any attempt on my part of make recommendations. My position is that as I recall the hundred little particles of life that glistened in the past, I am the happier when I do not come into contact with such a source of freezing particles, which, at best, leave me a little chilled, - and for myself I find life too short to be bothered with hearts lacking the warmth that means everything to one of like personality. I guess the whole thing boils down, not to a criticism, but rather an appraisal of something which is so different from what seems the most important thing in the world that I would prefer to let it sit (interruption) - to let it sit on its own little isolated island, enjoying the type of "Froidure" it likes best, and thus enabling me to absorb the warmth of sunnier climes that appeal to me.

Ever so long ago I became convinced that God, for mere convenience, fitted us up in patterns, - physically, - along lines of our progenitors, but gave us the recompense of finding souls of similar pattern to our own in any old place, and by no means tied to the blood kin from whence the body came but from whence the soul did not. We are happier in no company with people whose sense of values and people is more identical to our own, and God has scattered those souls far and wide, so that every day in our lives holds the promise of finding another kindred soul, not labeled on the family tree as anything particularly special. Alors, I'm done on this line.

(over)

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Melrose, Louisiana,
September 6th, 1945.

Dear Grandma,

I git a doctor for mama, and she is still in the bed and stay sick, and I don't know what her trouble, her stomach is all swell up and the doctor say so. I drink any water but a little bit and don't put no salt or her grub but a little bit. I git the doctor for her yesterday and he say she must stay in the bed, and that she have some water in her stomach, and as soon as she have money, she have to have all her teeth pulled and that is her trouble.

And mama say she is glad to hear from you and that she is sorry to hear that her sister's baby die.

All mama's clothes done got too little for her and I have to do them all over because her stomach got to big. And mama say she is so glad she have one girl to help her, just me, because Bessie she don't do nuthin', and the boys, they say they might try to help me out for her. The two boys they pick cotton, and Papa too, and Maria.

We can't get nothin' to eat around here, just like yonder. -
no clothes, no cloth.

Mama say the next time you write, please try to send a picture of you 'cause she want a picture of her mama.

I still got my job, and I still work for Miss Henry, and Miss Henry have to go off, and I still work for her.

That's a good thing I got a cow cause that's all mama can eat is milk and bread. I sure sorry for mama, and I glad I work I can git money for her, and when she get better I write you.

Bessie have to stay home to take care of her. She can't pick cotton cause she have to stay home. And I have to work hard to get money to take care of mama. Papa tell the two boys they got to help me with mama. . . . Papa say he was so hungry yesterday, he picked all day with nuthin in his stomach, and he ain't had nuthin in his stomach since the night before.

(over)

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I send you a picture. That's Aurellia
mama say that's the only girl she got cause she do more than
all the rest. We got two cows now, and seven hogs and five
chickens and two rooster.

We still study about my poor dead sister, Dora. We study
about her all the time. We still keep her clothes, and
she done die three years. I dreamed about her last night,
and me and she and Bessie was gettin' water, and she look
plumb natural.

My little squirrel leave me. I sorry he done gone. Some
ladies around here done give mama two chickens. I was so glad
I make some gumbo for her. That old lady she done know mama,
and she say when she get her check, she to give me some money,
and that will help me out.

And the lady say she go to see mama today.

And mama say she want to know how many children her mama
have got now and what they do, - if they make a crop or how.
And how many children they all done got. And mama want to
know if her mama stay by herself or with her daughters or with
who she stay. And Mama say her big girl, Maria, who stay
with her Papa, it look like she ain't got good sense, and she
say she don't like nobdly. But she pick cotton and Papa pick
cotton, too, and the two boys.

-nd Mama say she like to see her Mama before she die, and
she like to see her sisters, because she ain't see her sisters,
cause she ain't had no money to go to see them in a long time.
And it look like they could come here to see her, 'cause they
done got a car.

And Mama say to look at the picture 'cause that is
her right hand girl cause she do more for her, and she is
crazy about her, and that is the girl, Aurellia, and that is
her on the horse. And Mama say that's her girl who do
everything for her. And mama say that's the girl she had
at the time when that girl was little and the snake got in the
bed and sucked mama's breast and Mama thought it was her
little girl what was me the, but it was the big old snake.
And Papa didn't kill the snake when they found it was a snake,
because if he killed the snake the baby would die. And Mama
say now that girl, - that's me, is the one, she's big now, what
makes all her clothes. That's that girl what was a baby so that
mama couldn't go to see her papa's mama died, and mama could go
see her because I was a little baby and sick.

Please we want to hear from you all soon. I want to
know all the news.

from your granddaughter,

Oralee Bynog.

And Mama say Hello.

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the hills behind Perry, while the grandmothers lives somewhere near
Macon, Ga.

Sept

August 6th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I guess the date line should be altered to read September
instead of August, but aside from that, everything is alright thus
far.

I reckon you may be acquainted with the old story about
the cow who gave the pale or rather pail of milk, and then after having
given it, turned around and kicked it over.

Well, that is about the sum and substance of what la Pattison
did in the case of the Cane River manuscript.

Mrs. Land volunteered that her sister, Willie Wynn White, would
be enchanted to make a perfect transcript for me. Willie Wynn did
just that. But before the thing reached her hands, Mrs. Pattison
after reading the original to me, remarked that there were a few
errors in spelling, dropped letters, etc., and would it be alright
if she fixed those before giving the pages to Willie Wynn. It would.

Alright, came Monday, and with some degree of satisfaction
la Pattison brought forth the completed work, saying she would
like to point out a couple of places where she had "fixed it up". -
She had, - to my consternation, done just that.

And so a couple of pages will have to be re-typed, and I shall
have to write to Willie Wynn for the sheets that will be the same
as though she used in doing the whole business, - they are rather
thin and not at all like this paper for example. So kicked the cow.

interruption, - to write a letter for the house girl. I shall
try to make a carbon copy, and if it takes, - the carbon is old, -
I shall enclose the same.

And now that I have written the letter, I find that
in taking it down just as it was dictated, it is slightly on
the confusing side, and presupposes quite a lot on the part
of Grandma's memory. The Bynog's are listed as white by
the Government, and are the only ones among the depressed workers
on Cane River that I know about. Formerly they lived in

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the hills behind Derry, while the Grandmother lives somewhere near Monroe, La.

The episode about the snake is interesting. The family declares that the milk snake used to crawl into the bed at night and feed from Oralee's mama's breast, and that this constant milking enervated the mother and left little milk for the baby. It sounds like a tall tale to me, but it is probably based on some episode that approximates but does not duplicate the story as related. Milk snakes, although large, and quite harmless, and it is said that on rare occasions they have been known to work at the udder of a cow, but that always seemed extraordinary, if indeed true.

So turns the world about Cane River, - and this place in particular, which passes for being one of the most intellectual spots in the South, and yet paradoxically enough, the servants are illiterate, and the same housegirl that dictated the letter, when asked if she had ever heard of the Bible, allowed as how she had not, and when asked if she knew about Jesus, said: "No, but it seem like I done heard his name called once. Do he live near here?"

And the answer was: "Well, yes and no."

It being Thursday, Dr. Knipmayer, will pass this way after holding his Melrose Clinic up at St. Mathews. I think I shall give the housegirl the balance of the day off, and I shall take Dr. Knipmayer or to see the girls' mother, and after that, I shall ride with Dr. Knipmayer down to Magnolia, and have dinner with Miss Sally (Hertzog), and so return here about 1:30, and if it is raining, gather up Mr. Brew and see if we can untangle Mrs. Pattison's handiwork.

Sweet music issued forth from the gin yesterday afternoon when the first bale of cotton for 1945 came tumbling out of the press. Strictly speaking I should have said that it was the first bale of the autumn season, for last January the gin was still going full blast on the 1944 crop. But this year the crop will be harvested long before January and Ardenburg, accordingly will begin to feel the first birth-pains of its restored ante bellum complexion.

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September 8th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

There's a bird in the box, and accordingly I write in the dark. I may have mentioned this circumstance before, - it happens so frequently. Perhaps I haven't. In any event, I shall remark that the Valley Electric Company, J. H. Henry, President, operates the electrical service in this area. They have some kind of little boxes high up on the poles where ever there is a home using the current. In this box is housed some kind of gadgets, - fuses, I reckon, or some such outfit. Be that as it may, these little boxes seem to have been made primarily to intrigue the red birds, and the blue jays, for every few days, - and some times several times a day, either a Cardinal or a Jay starts house-hunting and carwls into this fine metal lodging, just to see what domestic promise it holds. No sooner is his head well in the box than his presence establishes some kind of a contact between two sources of power. Flash, - and lights for miles go out and the house-hunter is knocked slap out of the box and perhaps 20 feet from the pole where he has just started investigating the housing situation.

Obviously some unsuspecting feathered friend has chosen this early Saturday morning hour for the described purpose, and in consequence, we are out of lights and power, and so it will be until some repair men from Matchitoches get in their cap and inspect all the poles for 20 miles to see which one a few minutes ago had a bird in the box. As for myself, I am not much inconvenienced by such doings, unless I should chance to be getting some news. It is deadly on electric fans, however, and electric ice boxes, cotton gins, etc., seem helpless enough when one small bird and knock them slap out of commission for miles on end.

The enclosed note from Dora came to hand in yesterday's post. I was impressed by the part where he admonishes me to write more frequently. I must do so. His promise to do the same was heartening, too. You may recall that more than one of his epistles begins with the phrase: "Thanks for your letters of the 12th, 17th and 21st," - indicating, I suppose, that there has been some lapses in his own typewriter pushing.

News from Hot Springs, - telephonic, - indicates that things go swimmingly in the bath department. Gaiety seems to be the major note, and everyone reports having the finest kind of a time. All along I have felt that the chief concern was mental and not physical. I must start making plans for another outing for

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the patient, shortly after her return from Arkansas. South Louisiana should be next on the docket, I think. Only I don't want to be of the party. I shall cast about and see what victims are available for such a jaunt.

Pat, who made the trip to Hot Springs with them, returned to Melrose last night, after spending a couple of days with a friend near Pine Bluff, Arkansas. He said everything seemed to be going along fine when he left the ladies.

On Thursday, as suggested in my letter of that date, I dined with Miss Sally at Magnolia. Dr. Knipmayer, a Mr. Aldrich, Mat Hertzog, Miss Sally's son, - about J. H.'s age, and his daughter of some 17 summers, were the others who graced the table. It was a good dinner and beautifully served. There was only one fly in the ointment, Mat, who is hard of hearing, will not wear any hearing aid, and in consequence, one has to shout at him from time to time, to keep the conversation going all around the table. Of course anything shouted sounds a little ridiculous, and over a sumptuous board, doubly so.

Celeste picked me up about 2 and brought me home. A little later the Winks passed by. They stopped at the front gate but didn't come in. They then headed down the road, not thinking, or if thinking, (interruption) - in any event, not doing anything about stopping to see Oralea's mama, which is a curious kind of way for a physician to do, I should think.

For myself, I was all opposed to letting the poor thing just lie there and die. Accordingly I put in my 2 cents worth of nosiness and another physician was summoned. He pronounced her trouble to be caused by a faulty functioning of the liver. She is greatly bloated, and will go to the hospital this evening and have the water which is causing the swelling withdrawn. Otherwise she would die, it is said. I can only suppose that ignorance or indifference, - one or the other, explains the action, or lack of it on the part of her former physician. It's a strange business anyway you slice it.

So much for that, and I am glad there is going to be a withdrawal of said physician from this Parish, and send thence on to Shreveport.

Either today or Monday, I shall put a fat envelope in the mail, containing the Cane River article which you might eventually return, - although at your leisure. Never bother to return any enclosures unless especially requested. I haven't been able to get two secretaries to go over the article to see what changes were made, and so correct them. I shall eventually, however. Between many of the paragraphs, there is additional material to insert, should greater length be requested, but this is still in rough form and not being included in this draft. Must skip.....

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September 9th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service; in the event of a change in the schedule, I shall be under way, and I don't recall what is on the docket for today's doings, because, when I heard the schedule announced last week, I didn't recognize any familiar names. Perhaps, therefore, there may be some "learning" in store for me.

Yesterday's post brought the enclosed letter from Dora. I think the references need no explanation, - Miss A. is for little Miss Alberta, of course, and the people revolving about the general subject of Shreveport, of course, are the Winks.

His mention of the visit of Mrs. Mayes to Melrose leaves me as dumb as was he in the memory of what that lady may have been like. So far as I know, I may never have met her, which would account for my failure to recall her identity. I gather, - if I read the letter right, that she came here while Eli was present. That was a tempestuous week end, with jealousy having reached its high point, and things were in such a turmoil that possibly existing circumstances blotted out the less striking features of the day. Anyhow, - I can't recall the bag's visit.

In the same mail came a letter, which the clerk told me, on handing it to me, was from the Texas Garden Club. I assumed it was from Betty Smedley, and with that in mind, I had read the thing half through before my mind suddenly went into a tail-spin, and I realized that it was not from la Smedley in Austin but la Lake in Fort Worth. I shall eventually send it along to you, although it is of no especial interest, save that it demonstrates the Texas tendency to speak large, - if not boastfully, on any subject, personal or gubernatorial. I am first sending it to Dora, in order that he may make notation as to address and possible particulars that may come to hand, - or rather may serve shortly, should we put on a Fort Worth Show of Clemence's things. La Lake was here late one evening a few weeks ago. She writes for several Texas papers, I think, - especially on Art stuff, and possibly her facile pen can serve to further our project when the time comes.

Saturday was a sultry day. In the afternoon, in spite of the heat and humidity, I worked in the garden. There was some

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blue sky and some clouds. Quite unexpectedly a bolt crashed down from the blue. It hit a big old pecane some hundred feet from me. Momenarily, things seemed so atomic.

In the Spring, when I was laying out J. H.'s yard, he asked me if I wasn't going to take out a 30 foot live oak groing along the Bermuda road. He said within another year or so, its branches would be touching the big old pecane that was growing hard by. I demurred and told him to get on with his plantation management while I put his garden in order. He laughed, and the next week one of my colored friends came to me and said that that morning the boss had had a couple of men plant a pecane on the river bank, admonishing them the while not to tell Francois because he doesn't like pecanes.

Yesterday's bolt from the blue has most certainly marked the original old pecane for death. It might survive a couple of years. It will probably pass out at the end of this season. At supper last night, J. H. grinned when he spoke of the loss of the fine pecane, remarking the while: "Well, it looks as though you had contrived with the powers to make a place in the sun for that live oak you wouldn't let me out."

At noon yesterday one of my younger graycats refused to eat the fine dinner of corn bread and milk which I laid out for him. He merely mewed and stretched himself out on the cool brick pavement of the gallery. By five o'clock he was no more. J. H. has always declared in colored folks on Melrose are determined to die, they show much sense by timing the business on a Friday or Saturday, since one is guaranteed a much bigger and better wake on the week end. My cat was smart, you see. But Saturday night, in spite of the assumed favor-ability, - proved lonely enough, for it was I who was the sole mourner, - everyone else having already headed out for Sammy Balthazar's. I had no catnip, and so I placed a big spray of butterfly lily between his paws, laying the body out in a fine white casket made of a shoe box, and so laid him to rest beneath a big old gardenia bush. It was all very touching and very prosaic, but on asking Ora Lee or Aurellia, as she is more frequently sylted, I learned something as to the cause or probable cause of his death, which astonished me.

On inquiring as to what she thought might have laid him low, she was quick with an answer: "He was old."

"A heap of cats can't tell a frog from a toad. They eats a frog, and they's alright. But they eats a toad and it kills them every time. What, you don't know about a toad? Well, a frog's a frog, and a toad is a frog, too, - the same thing. - but a toad is a frog what's gone bad, and it will sure kill you every time to tries to eat him. So there you are, - Cane River folk lore by way of the hills."

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The gin functioned all day yesterday, - up until "first dark". What with the constant rains and heavy dews, only the lower bowls on the stalks, - unfortunately higher than a man's head it is year, are opening. It make for slow picking, and the lint itself when gathered is damp. Accordingly the cotton clogs in the knives of the gin stands and not too many blaes roll out, although the labor is twice as difficult, as contrasted with dry cotton.

During the actual fighting around the world, the darkies never complained about food shortages, although they were pressee for something to eat. This is especially so since there has been little or no lard, and lard is the basic commodity for their corn-bread greens, etc. But now that the actual fighting is finished, they find it difficult to understand why they can't get things from the store. (interruption).

I reckon the store, foreseeing the possibility of getting leather shoes instead of "ersats" stuff, has hesitated about ordering a fresh supply until assured that leather is on the way. In consequence there are few if any pairs available. Last night a big old youth dropped by to be-maon the ways of the world. During the week, he had worn a pair of shoes so frayed out that he kept a sole on one of them by winding a wire around and around his foot. After sundown, he went to the store to get himself his weekly wage, and to invest it in a pair of shoes, in order that he might, after putting on his Sunday clothes, head up toward Sammy's where every Saturday night the local youths swing out, - as they express it, - meaning that they go in for rather fancy dancing with their girl friends. Well, the store just didn't have any shoes, size 10, and here he was, all done up in his Sunday clothes, and he just wouldn't show himself on the dance floor with his old shoes, and besides you can't dance, as he explained it, with your sole tied up in a hay wire. You know, he really had something there.

Life idid taken on a gloomy aspect for him. Finally he thought of an acquaintance on Little River who might have a pair of size 10's that he could borrow. He appropriated a horse and rode the three miles to Little Riger, - and dejectedly, the three miles back. His friend didn't have any shoes.

Eventurally I convinced him that a little shoe polish might work wonders. It did, - but it didn't do away with the hay wire, and the necessity for the same. But at least he could head on up the road, and stand outside where the shadows by the open window would hide his foot gear. "What else has us-es got if it ain't a pair of dancin' shoes on a Saturday night?" was his question, - and for the life of me, I couldn't say.

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Alright, - I reckon I must have just about talked
an ear off, and I apologize for rattling along at such a great
rate. I notice by the fine time piece facing me here on my
desk that invitation to learning is about to start and so
I shall fold. "If you will only let people do all the
talking, they are bound to have a fine time," says the
Madam. Well, you must admit, I have certainly given myself
a perfectly splendid morning.....Poor you, - and not
a chance to get a word in edgeways.....

During the actual lighting around the world, the
complicated about food shortages, although they were pressed for
something to eat. This is a very difficult thing to do, and I
little to no on to the best of the world, and I am
bread crumbs, etc. But now that the actual lighting is finished,
they find it difficult to understand why they can't find
from the store. (magnification)

P. S.

In view of An ellia's frog-toad explanation, I
must ask her about the skunk department. Already
I can hear her explaining that a skunk is nothing more
or less than just an old Grandpa what's gone bad.
Last night a big old frog-toad came to my door and
during the week, he had worn a pair of shoes so
trayed out that he kept a sole on one of them by winding a wire
around and around his foot. After sundown, he went to the
store to get himself a new weekly wage, and to invest it in
a pair of shoes, in order that he might, after putting on
his Sunday clothes, head up toward Sammy's where every Saturday
night the local youths swing out. - as they express it, - meaning
that they go in for rather fancy dancing with their girl friends.
Well, the store just didn't have any shoes, size 10, and here
he was, all alone in his Sunday clothes, and he just wouldn't
show himself on the dance floor with his old shoes, and besides
you can't dance, as he explained it, with your sole tied up in
a wire. You know, he really had something there.

Life is taken on a gloomy aspect for him. Finally he
thought of an acquaintance on Little River who might have
a pair of size 10's that he could borrow. He appropriated a
horse and rode the three miles to Little River, - and
detected, the three miles back. His friend didn't have any
shoes.

Eventually I convinced him that a little shoe polish
might work wonders. It did, - but it didn't do away with the
wire, and the necessity for the same. But at least he
could head on up the road, and stand outside where the shadows
by the open window would hide his foot best. "What else has he
got it if it ain't a pair of dandy shoes on a Saturday night?" was
his question, - and for the life of me, I couldn't say.

0131

1342

During the past several days I have been very busy, and
consequently I have been unable to write you. I am sorry
that I have not been able to do so, but I am sure you will
understand. I am sure you will understand.

Memorandum to Clipping. Service: as usual, excepted and
to hand your perfectly elegant report as of Thursday
last past, and a million thanks for the same.

In reading it I was struck by the remark made to me
yesterday by a friend who had been discussing The Bible,
wherein he mentioned the idea that the word angels, in The
Bible, always seemed to me "Thought" or "Idea", and that
when God sent an angel, He was in reality sending a Divine
Thought or Idea, and that anything coming from God was perfect.
Going a step further, he remarked that anything coming to
us from God is perfect, and partaking of it, we ourselves
become a little more perfect, and that the ultimate goal toward
which we all move is that perfection in God. And with
your letter to hand, and the sensation of goodness which always
characterizes my feelings on receipt of such epistles, I
realize the more fully why the contact, afforded by this
correspondence, means so much to me. And for your part is
making this life worth while, my never ending gratitude.

You were so good as to quote from the card catalogue
regarding the early Natchitoches Meziers, or rather to
material in reference to that gentleman, - the great, great
grandfather of some of our local mulattoes. I have heard
of that 1914 publication. I am under the impression that
there is a copy of it in the Melrose collection. But
like the million other things scattered about the place, it
stands for one of those locked mysteries, so far as I am
concerned. There is a street in Natchitoches named after
de Meziers's son-in-law, St. Denis, - I believe that was the
relationship, but all of that earlier period is pretty well
clouded in my mind. I should like to know more about it
eventually. It seems remarkable that de Meziers should have had
a wife and two or three daughters in this remote country in
those early years, - especially as the family was of consider-
able importance in the France of those days. Somewhere or
other I once had a big old Coat-of-Arms of the family, if
memory serves, but when I acquired it, and put it aside, I
had never heard of the Louisiana association. I think
old St. Denis was buried in Natchitoches, but whatever
happened to his father-in-law, I know not. It would also
be interesting to learn, - which is probably impossible, the
date of birth of his first born mulatto child as it relates
to the advent of his white family from France, - for I assume
he preceded their advent into this remote situation.

1343

1343

During the past several days, I have thought often of your patient and the probable demands made in consequence upon your time and energy. I shall not set down what feelings are prevailing my mind at the moment, but somehow the feeling that his departure, if it means re-joining those who have gone before, depresses me not so much as it would, had he not out-lived his life associates. I hope the outing in New England gives you strength to carry on without too much drain upon your own physical resources.

The mention of Uncle Herman struck me forcibly, for during the past two or three days I noticed he had crossed my mind several times. I have long wondered how he figured in the matter of sometime back wherein Tilloah played the stellar role, and how he has occupied his time since things went to the wall in his former situation. Somehow he always struck me as being a good natured but weak soul, which in time of stress, like a drop of mercury, would fly into a thousand particles when it struck a hard basic surface.

In yesterday's post came a thin package, addressed to the Madam, from Frances Benjamin Johnston. It is about 10 by 12 inches, and no doubt contains a couple of shots she took at Melrose, - one of the Madam alone and one of the Madam and me together. I haven't opened it, and think I shall not.

While I think of it, some time back, the Madam asked me to ask you to try and get an inexpensive edition of Henry van Dyke's *The Other Wise Man*, which she wants to give J. H. If it could get here before September 24th, it would be nice. If not, it will be alright. I mention it belatedly, and please don't rush about looking for one, as the "out of print" business will readily cover this item.

Yesterday I skipped out to have an hour with Charles Masurette on "Little River." What with an expanding hip line, I thought it better to forego the services of a horse, and accordingly headed out through the pecane groves about 10 a.m. I made the five miles in about an hour, stopping but once or twice to chat with dusky hued friends en route. The sun was high and hot, and when I reached my destination, I took a bath to start with, hanging my clothes on the line, - for I was soaked, and arrayed myself in some of my host's clothes. We had a pleasant dinner, Scotch broth, onion omelette, asparagus with rice, creamed asparagus, a luscious tomato salad, ice tea and ice cream and coffee. Charles had been setting aside several different items from current magazines, including *New Week's* account of the Pearl Harbor business, which interested me much. I spoke of the Morgan lease to the Soviets, and I was so glad you had told me about it, so that I could speak on that point.

1344

Between this bage ~~the~~ and the foregoing, Aurelia came, to announce that yesterday she had taken her mama to the hospital in Alexandria. In reality, J. H. took them both down, bring back Aurelia about 1 o'clock last night. I am glad the old woman is in the hospital, for there she is bound to get some care. She has a fair chance to survive, under the circumstances, - but she would have had little hope to do so, had she remained, neglected here.

Back to "Little River": - I headed back this way about 4, having changed back into my own raiment. Crossing Little River bridge, I heard someone call to me. I thought it was Archillius, who lives near the bridge. I started in his direction, - of or toward his house, when in another direction I heard the door of a car slam. Then I discovered that a car was standing in the pool of shade formed by a big old pecane tree near by, completely camouflaged by the intensity of the sun versus the shadow. It was Emmett Anthony, pronounced "Im-met", a friend of mine who was heading toward Melrose, and so I climbed aboard his truck, - with Dora galloping along side, - Dora being Texas, the family dog of whom I may have spoken before.

Back home and a hot bath, and so to work on a couple of idea I had stirred up while walking in the morning, - and that about brings us up to now.

There were a couple of other points I wanted to cover, but I shall have to let them slide for the moment.

Thanks again for your nice, nice letter. In the event you have had an opportunity to run through the imperfect Cane River manuscript, I should appreciate your advise as to what section you find the most dull, and which section is the least clear. The fact that the thing is designed for readers unacquainted with this section, your advise will be of the greatest benefit to me, so that when I make the inserts and re-arrange the present text, I can be bolstered by your suggestions. Must gallop.....

3889

145

September 13th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It was good of you to take time out, when under such a pressure, both from business and personal affairs, to drop me a line.

That your patient should have gone is perhaps best. Somehow I have a feeling that with life so radically altered, his wife departed, and his own chances of health precarious, he is better in eternal rest. The little interim between his wife's death and his own final illness was such a kindly interlude, thanks to the hundred and one large and small acts of charity on your part, that somehow his own final departure was made the easier, and his frame of mind more completely in harmony with the circumstance entailed by such a journey, - so that I know he was in an acceptable mood, - thanks to you, - and the opportunity thus afforded him to weigh the advantages of a continued life with his departed companion in life, instead of remaining too long behind.

You mention your regret that you were at home with friends on Friday night. On second thought, I am sure you do not regret that either, since you were maintaining the pattern of one phase of life and he opening the chapter on another. It is not important, I think, that we be with a departing soul at the particular moment of its take off. The important thing is that the day to day life as we pass it together is so arranged that when the last moment comes, what has gone before has adequately prepared our state of mind, - should be conscious, - and given us sufficient faith in things to come, to make that final moment one of satisfaction. I always recall that Madam Roosevelt once remarked that when the final hour comes, we must of necessity undertake it alone, - but I would add the thought that we are never alone after we have once experienced the kinliness of another, for somehow the heart is always wrapped in a special batting of good cheer, regardless of the physical presence of a friend, regardless of the location and physical distance as between them, - no matter how vital the circumstance.

Under separate cover I enclose a couple or three letters from Dora. I am always delighted when he demonstrates his enthusiasm for Lemence's things by writing in detail about each, knowing that these items have just been pretty thoroughly gone over by me before I bounce them in his direction.

(over)

1346

In regard to the Simon Schuster item, I advised him to apply for the blank immediately, and at the same time expressed the opinion that it is just another form of those so-called "Prize" things which publishers, as opposed to something like the Noble or Pulitzer Foundations get out. There are no doubt some honest publishers who offer prizes, but as in the present case of Simon and Schuster, it appears to me to be merely a manner of getting a whole flock of manuscripts to hand with a slightly incorrect statement of intention, since the "prize", after all, is merely an advance in royalties, and almost every publisher makes such advances, once a book has been accepted.

It was my intention to write you yesterday, but circumstances prevented. At 7 p.m., - out of a clear sky, - Old Man River appeared. He had driven up from New Orleans, leaving that place in the morning with Joe Gilmore, his servant, acting as Chauffeur, and Robert Tallant, his former associate in "Pa. as his guest. I was furious.

I think there is no excuse at all for such a move, what with telegraph and telephone facilities what they are.

Although slightly bent financially, I had arranged for two secretaries to labor with me on straightening out the Cane River manuscript, - filling in the obvious gaps, and restoring the phrases and sentences that had been dropped or altered so greatly. Had he telephoned or wired before 5 p.m., - he had started out at 10:30 in the morning, - I might have cancelled my appointment. But by 7 p.m., one of the people had already started in this direction, and since the trip was 15 miles here and 15 miles back, I felt it only fair to recompense the person, even though no work could be accomplished, - what with all my datat so arranged in my house, which he and his friends, had so unexpectedly taken over.

He seems to be entirely off drink and more consumed than ever with his own doings, which are very much, - momentarily, devoted to making walking sticks, - even as Lestan was consumed with his old turkey tail fans.

Well, they remained up and talking until 2 a.m., and as Pat was leaving at 4:30 to catch the train for Baton Rouge, to begin college, I was out of luck so far as sleep goes.

Next morning about 9, they decided that I would go to Natchitoches with them, and to Grand Moore and that they would bring me back here. I demurred. "At least you will run over to Celine's with us", - but I wouldn't, and I reckon they realized I was provoked, as I was, when they left out. I certainly hope I don't seem they again right away. Must skip.

1347

After the excessive heat of the early part of the week, we are now enjoying a cool night. The thermometer showed 71. It seems to be the winter of discontent.

The skies are clear, however, and the sun is shining in such cool air. The waxing moon is a great help these nights. For the "University" at St. Augustine, and a good moon always helps out students. I don't know if you are a student, but as the ladies say, to make a town tonight.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I begin this letter at 11:30 a.m., what with a lot of things to do in the unusually busy routine of a road-running week end. Pilgrims came by early this morning, and knocked out the correspondence department. I am told the Dr. Gray and Dr. Burden, both of U. S. U. have just arrived and are going to be here for dinner, and I may have to break off abruptly to break bread with them. Having several little matters to attend to in Natchitoches, I am running in to town this afternoon with Celesta, who leaves here at 1, so don't be alarmed if this comes to a sudden halt in the midst of a word or a phrase.

The enclosed letter from little Miss Alberta speaks for itself. In mentioning it, I recall that she says the manuscript is being sent to me at Cypress, - ten miles from here, and off the beaten track, save for what the Texas and Pacific Railroad trods. I must go by there and send the thing along to Mr. Pipes, so that he may forward it to someone in New York. Dr. Knipmayer came by yesterday morning rather earlier than usual. I accompanied him on his round of calls between here and Magnolia, where I dined with Miss Sally, returning here immediately afterward. It was a pleasant dinner with nice people present. It seems that the night before they had a mule derby at Magnolia, with colored boys riding the mules. The headlights of the automobiles were used to illuminate the race course, which was alright to begin with, but when the mules had galloped three quarters of the way around, they suddenly ran into the direct beams of the cars which completely blinded them, and all suddenly stopped in their tracks, - the jockeys going straight along through the air toward the goal post. It was the jockey who flew the farthest who won the race, naturally.

I jotted off a line to the Waco ladies in the afternoon. It didn't take long. What I wrote was this: "Dear Ladies: - Well, I declare. Steadfastly, f." Short but bitter, as it were.

(over)

1348

After the excessive heat of the early part of the week, we are now enjoying a cool spell, - the thermometer around 51. It seems like the middle of the winter by contrast.

The skies are clear, however, and the sun is delightful in such cool air. The waxing moon is a great help these nights, too, for the "anniversary" at St. Augustine's on Little River began last night, and a good moon always helps out attendance. I didn't go, but "am a-fixin'" as the darkies say, to make a round tonight.

Clemence's grandson, Brother, aged 6, sent me word by Mary Frances this morning that he would be looking for me tonight. Mary Frances, who goes over to King's house almost every evening, says that Brother stands by the window looking up the road every night, saying that he knows I am coming to see him. He is a sweet child and seems to have just about as big a crush on me as I have on him, although I suspect an occasional orange or apple in my pocket for him may account for a large block of my popularity and his impatience to see me heading down the road. Anyhow, we hit it off alright together, and I shall pass by to see him tonight before heading out for Little River.

I have given some thought to Dora's recent letter, already forwarded in a previous letter, regarding his severance with Oklahoma Press. I hope it was done tactfully. I think he is perfectly right in withdrawing most of his stuff from the press, everything which might be published by a commercial house, but for things like "Uncle Ike" and the Chase Diary, I can't imagine any other press, save a university, doing such a manuscript. It has seemed characteristic of the press that so far as I know, nothing was ever done by way of approaching Dora and me on the matter of editing the Uncle Ike business. I think they should have asked us to do the thing, explaining that funds were available to such and such a figure for the work, and would be glad to do it, or, on the other hand, if no funds were available, I think they should have so stated and asked if we cared to devote some time and labor to the business for the sheer pleasure of getting the thing into print. But never did I have such a proposition, and I assume Dora never did either.

I think I explained in my last letter relative to the Simon-Schuster matter that I thought Dora would do well to make application on his own hook, since grants are usually given to a single individual rather than to collaborators. I think the whole thing, however, is like the so-called "Literary Prizes" which are nothing more or less than a means to collect a lot of manuscripts without the services of a literary scout, and the "prize" is nothing more than an advance on royalties, - which any house will make on acceptance of a manuscript. ---I must fly.....

1349

September 15th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Extraordinary weather for September in Louisiana.

I pen you these lines just before dawn, and it is so chill that I have built myself a fine fire, which seems odd indeed for this time of year. I shall have to give a look at my fine bunches of bananas which, up until now, have given promise of reaching maturity. Celeste came to look at them yesterday and found the plants larger than any she saw someplace in South America where she made a special trip to look over a plantation of them while on a cruise down that way some years ago. I must admit the plants astonish me, for they are almost as high as this house, which, if memory serves, so far as photos go, is fairly high. The fact that this growth represents but four months in time does give some idea as to the speed with which they travel from the ground toward Heaven.

I had a fairly busy afternoon, going to town immediately after Dr. Gray and Dr. Burdon left. I dropped around to make a final payment on the concession to beauty outfit, and thence to the medecin for a check-up.

After that I called at Miss Ette Levy's, but finding her and Aunt Lottie out, I strolled a little in their pleasant garden, and thence caught a ride back home.

Supper with J. H., and as I had suspected, he brought up a point of policy that is interesting. He asked me how much the Cloutierville people wanted for their property. I told him I didn't know. He said it might be a good idea for the Estate to buy it forthwith, in order to guarantee their departure. I said I thought that would provide a place to return to when the wife wrecked the husband's business in Shreveport. He said that his idea was to purchase the place through an agent so the Wenks wouldn't know that the Estate had acquired it. If that could be accomplished, and that is a big "if", I could see the point, but I thought, as I told him, that such a transaction might leak.

(over)

1350

I learn from Paynie who was in Hot Springs Wednesday, that the specialist who examined the Madam, prior to her baths, was shocked when he learned of the liberal doses of codine she had been taking, - and still is. He demanded to know the name of the physician. Sensing a need to protect her son-in-law, she lied and said it was Dr. Hargrove, the heart specialist of Shreveport. The Hot Springs physician says he is going to turn the big guns of the Medical World against Dr. Hargrove. I hope he does. For in that event, the big sheals may bounce from Shreveport slap into Cloutierville, where they should explode. But Paynie says his mama insists on having the codine, and, of course, if she insists, she will get it through the regular channel. Isn't that a mess?

After supper I went down to see my girl friend. It would seem that folks are beginning to get into the swing of the cotton picking department, for while it was approaching first dark, our girl friend was just returning from the fields, as was Mary Frances and Winnie Way and Beulah and so forth. Brother had sighted me far up the road, and tugging his sack behind me, he came a'jumping. We had quite a little chat, mostly about starting in school in October. - negro schools always open a month later than white schools! Brother asked me if I thought Santa Claus would bring him a bicycle this Christmas so that he could ride to school. I told him I doubted it, what with the war and all, but possibly he might work out something so that a big old bus could take all the colored children. He thought that would be even better. Four miles in the cold to walk to school is really too much, - added to the 4 mile return trip.

Clemence says she has need of yellow paint and some brushes, so I shall write as much to Ora. She wanted me to look over some of her latest creations, but I knew the children were hungry and that time was getting close for Yank, her "helper" to be coming in, and so I pleaded that the light was so fading that I would wait until another time. Mr. Brew, in the pickup truck, passed the house, having taken some of the workers home, and so I flagged him down, and returned with him. We stopped on the way where there was a pretty angle of the river, stretching toward the south west at about the same angle it does at Arenbourg, and while I watched the marvelous changes of lights on its smooth silver surface, Mr. Brew read me your Monday's report, and it was good. And thanks, too, for setting me straight as to Santiago. I should have remembered that, for once I used to send mail down that way when some kind folk were building a factory at Antofagasto or some such strange place. I am hoping you didn't telephone on Tuesday at all. El director, if insistant to such a point, should have had a telephone installed in the cemetery, so that you might give a running account. - must skip....

1351

September 16th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

What with it being Sunday and all, I cannot resist making a map. I think the neighborhood is so well fixed in your mind that to sketch it again is superfluous. Still, I have a feeling that our sufficiently identical so that the one is as satisfied to run over familiar places as the other.

Accordingly, I have indicated on the reverse side of this page a general idea of how Cane River loops around all over the place in this particular area. The proportions are about right. I have neglected to put in a scale of miles, but I think you will get an idea of that in realizing that it is said to be about a mile from Melrose house to the Spillway.

I have only indicated a few of the cabins along the river's margin. I might have added crosses between Arenbourg and the Bridge on the East bank to indicate "Phoneie's house and Puny's..

Between Melrose house and the Spillway, I might had indicated the succeeding houses which follow along in this order: - the overseer, Mattie, Bluff, Bud, Sam Peace, Evelina Beseley, P'temite, Jack Marcel, Sam Brown, Wile Anthony's (spillway) Regis's Metoyer's mama, Miss Willie's, Clemence's and King Hunter.

I guess that is enough geography for this sitting, and a pretty dull lesson it is, too. I would remark in passing, however, that the road, indicated by the broken line, (interruption), - the road so frequently passes along the margin of the river, that in reality there are comparative ly few sites wherein houses may be located without the road cutting them off from the river, - that is to say, where the road does not run between the house and the river.

The interruption was by Peter Baptiste who came to tell me that "Doc." Cross died this morning at the home of his daughter' on Little River. Parenthetically, I might say that his daughter is currently in the Charity Hospital in Alexandria. I think I shall mention "Doc." Cross at some length, for what little I know about him seems to disprove everything that medical science has come to take as a matter of course.

1352

B / A

September 15th, 1946

Service of process:

10 "Not with it being - today and all. I cannot resist making a man. I think the neighborhood is so well fixed in your mind that it is again in question. Well, I have a feeling that our condition is identical so that the one is as satisfied to run over familiar places as the other."

Accordingly, I have indicated on the reverse side of this page a general idea of how Kane River could be developed over the place in this particular area. The proportions are about right. I have suggested to you in a scale of miles, but I think you will get an idea of that in realizing that it is said to be about a mile from Malone house to the tollway.

I have only indicated a few of the cabins along the river's margin. I might have added places between Atsahpung and the bridge on the West bank to indicate "Abnashie's house and Pung's."

Between the horse and the highway, I might have indicated the
succeeding houses which follow in this order: - the overpass,
bottle, but, Sam Pease, Avonia Resale, I think, Jack Marshall, Sam
Brown, the highway (highway), Keri's Motor, Mike Willis's
Kemer's and the highway.

I guess that is enough geography for this sitting, and I guess it is too. I would remark in passing, however, first to the fact that the broken line of civilization - the road to Kankajura - passes along the margin of the river and in reality there are no extensive low lands between the river and the hillsides. A few sides wherein houses may be located without the need cutting them off from the river - that is to say, where the road does not run between the houses and the river.

100. Cross died this morning at the home of his daughter, on a table

- A - Arenbourg
B - "Celina"
C - Saloon
D - Bridge
E - St. Augustin's Church
F - Pagabou's House.
G - Mr. Brew's
H - Garage.
I - J. H.'s house.
J - Melrose House
K - Store
L - Spillway
M - Clemence's house.
N - Site of Jean Baptiste Mettoy House.

1353

To begin with, you may have heard me mention little Elam in times gone bye. Well, Elam Brown's mother is Nina Hachette and her mother is "Doc" Cross's daughter, making little Elam, - larger than I am, - a great grandson of old "Doc".

Old "Doc" was a tall, large boned, rather thin man. He was always a resident of Melrose, and the first time I saw him he was sitting on the store gallery here, one foot wrapped up in a vast bundle of clothes. His hair was white but in spite of his limp and the use of a cane, he gave the impression of being perhaps 50 or 60 years old.

He frequently walked the five miles from his home on Little River up to Melrose, although whenever possible, he did catch a ride. In view of this vigor at the age of 85, I was somewhat surprised one day when I learned that "Doc." had been taken to Alexandria to have both his legs taken off just below the body. It seems that for years he had never let anyone see him without his legs being well bundled up, and then, through some slip or other, one of his daughters chance to enter his room on a hot morning while he was still asleep, and was startled to see that "Doc."s feet and his legs half way to the knee, had no flesh on them at all, - merely the bones. It seems, as later developed, that "Doc." had been in this situation for "ever so long", but in spite of that, - and an extraordinary will power, he had somehow been able to get around by the use of a cane, and had walked miles to boot.

I have never heard of anything like it, - such vigor being displayed after so much flesh had rotted away, and while it is disgusting to consider, still it is remarkable that he was able to get about as he did.

After having both legs removed, - 2 or 3 years ago, he returned to Little River, and seems to have been as active in a wheelchair as he formerly was with his cane. "at Sunday afternoon some of his people came here to ask me to telephone a physician. "Doc." had had a stroke. I telephoned one in Natchitoches, and later the physician told me that there was little hope for recovery, as the old man was completely paralyzed. And so "Doc." has lived out one more week, and this morning he is dead, and tonight, - what with a big moon and dry roads between Cane and Little Rivers, there will be a big old wake with scores of oldsters and youngsters in attendance, and tomorrow they will bury him in some forgotten graveyard, and this remarkable example of a will to live will have departed on his final journey.

Between this paragraph and the one above, I have listened to Columbia's Invitation to Learning. I, somehow, found myself wishing all the time that circumstances were permitting you to listen also. Nathat, the Wise by Lessing, I have never seen nor read, and perhaps never shall, but it has certainly meant much to me to hear the opinions expressed by the three gentlemen on the program, and I am impressed by the number of tangent-thoughts that there observations (observations) set flying off from the central theme. I wish Mr. Lewishon had had an opportunity to talk more.

1354

In regard to whether the play had a "message", I liked what was pointed out, - that everything said, - they might have added, done, - is a message automatically. I have so often heard musicians and painters decry one composition or painting because it wasn't pure Art but propaganda, - I believe is the word used. For myself, I have always inclined toward those very manifestations in Art, for it has seemed to me that is the artist had ever succeeded in distilling something that was "pure abstract", - so often vaunted as something remarkable, and I have always maintained that "pure abstract" was less than Art, for, so far as my re-action went, it was just "pure nothing". I never before had thought of "pure art" as being applied to the drama, but of course it could be just as well as to any other form of Art. And surely the application is particularly apt, since it so well illustrates, - perhaps clearer than music or painting, that nothing in this world could be so much more ridiculous that a play that was purely abstract, with no point whatsoever in it that would be productive on ideas, - and especially human ideas, - if that combination of words may be used.

I did like the parable of The Three Rings, too. It has been years since I have heard it mentioned, and I had completely forgotten it until this broadcast. How excellent it is, especially as applied to religion, race, economy, etc., - that is to say that each of the three rings are authentic and each recipient should so govern himself as to make patent to the world that his is the authentic one, - the highest proof being in his recognition that the other two may be equally so.

This is certainly a curious hodge-podge of a letter, and with my apologies, I shall have to let it go forward at this point or toss it into the basket. Aurellia's mama is in the Alexandria hospital, where she appears to be improving nicely from her liver trouble. I gave Aurellia the day so that she could run down to see her mama, and I shall have dinner with A. and Celeste and the latter's mother, Madam Regard, - a kindly soul, and that will be pleasurable. This evening I shall remain at this machine, jotting down some thoughts on the Little Mansion instead of going to St. Augustine's on Little River, as I should like to do. Tonight, after I have supped alone, I shall take to the big road, for there is every promise of a clear sky with a million stars and a pretty good sized moon. I think I shall not go to the wake, but rather travel along the Bermuda Road, to see how Arenbourg sleeps, and to contemplate what is first to be done when the cotton is finished for 1945.

between this paragraph and the one above, I have listened to Milamba's invitation to listening. I, somehow, found myself wishing all the time that circumstances were permitting you to listen also. That, the Wise by passing, I have never seen nor read, and perhaps never shall, but it has certainly meant much to me to hear the opinions expressed by the three gentlemen on the program, and I am impressed by the number of tangent-thoughts that these observations (observations), set flying off from the central theme. I wish Mr. Lewison had had an opportunity to talk more.

1355

1326

to
You were quite right in saying you knew I would be glad to
learn of Aaron's return. Of course, I am thinking of no one whose
return would give me greater satisfaction. He was always such a
grand guy and I was always the feeling that sometime
one of us would likely find our roads interesting again.
I am with you on that. I am sure such a possibility is
going to be an exciting feeling. You do not find this over

Memorandum to Shipping Service: Twenty-five million thanks for the most excellent report, just come to hand, which along with the enclosures on such interesting stationary, that I cannot begin to express my indebtedness to you for all the pleasures it affords me.

I refer to various possibilities to which the various types of paper might be used, - Natchez, Arenbourg, etc., but I hasten to say that very definitely it is the Arenbourg development for which it is best suited, think, and I am accordingly setting such material aside for just that purpose.

What little cotton there is is now rolling and the weather, although cool, remains fair. Everyday of sunshine is doubly thrilling because it means that Arenbourg is that much nearer and the sooner will a start be made, thanks to one who understands, - the sooner will applications of one form or another, based on reports, be started.

Your report, covering so many other topics was splendid. The several angles that became apparent following the departure of your patient, were especially intriguing. Strange how things come to the surface at such a time. As I recall d'Amunzio once contemplated going aloft, high above some remote section of the Alps, and there in his plane exploding a bomb that would obliterate every vestgae of his physical self, and so fill the world with wonder as to where he had disappeared. . . One big difference between these two gentlemen, however, seems to have been in the fact that the whole world knew by heart what was perpetually stirring, while it was in complete ignorance of the other's activities.

one of You saw Tilloah. I was interested in the report concerning his physical appearance and his intention to do a bit of traveling. The latter feature sounds good, even though the family of his hostess will no doubt be as distracting as those he left at home. Perhaps grandchildren don't worry people so much as their great activity and their noise, as people without children or grandchildren. Perhaps, too, in this instance, the grandchildren may have a mellowing effect, which would be all to the good. Somehow I always felt that Tilloah was so wrapped up in his own cake of ice that the warmth of his heart never did get a very large circle of radiation. Perhaps all that has happened during the past few years may have thawed things out a little. I hope so, for his own sake, since nothing seems to warm one's own soul so much as projecting it beyond one's own personal confines and limitations.

(P.S. Please return old man river at convenience, I'll
send to dora

1356

You were quite right in saying you knew I would be glad to learn of Egon's return. Off hand, I can think of no one whose return would give me greater satisfaction. He was always such a grand guy, and then, too, there was always the feeling that sometime or other all of us would likely find our roads intersecting again, and it is with relish that I contemplate such a possibility. Someday it is going to be interesting to learn if you do not find his wife ever so much like Celeste. Should the two of them come together, they might not appear at all in that manner, and yet, as I view them, the one present, the other in retrospect, I am enormously impressed by the similarity of appearance and mental equipment.

In this letter, - or an accompanying one, I shall enclose letters from old man river and from dora. Of the old man river one, it is interesting that it should have been written at all, for it is the first bread and butter one I ever knew him to send. I reckon it may be because he thought, - and quite rightly, that I was mad. In the letter, if I remember correctly, he apologizes that he should have come unannounced, but says that he had no other alternative. Now that must be a phrase he has used so often that he has forgotten its meaning. I can think of at least three alternatives: - he might have wired or telephoned or not come in at all, - by remaining in Alexandria. But of course it is ridiculous to apply any kind of normal pattern of social rules in that case.

The line from Life, as copied by Dora, sound very nice. I am not including the prospectus from Simon and Schuster, as I am returning it herewith to him by return mail. I, for my part, want to have nothing to do with that business. I have already written him, although he had not received the letter, that I think the Scrapbook would probably as soon be accepted by D. Appleton-Century, Macmillan or Random House, and that they would make an advancement as against royalties to as great an amount as the so-called Simon and Schuster grant, which is nothing more or less in itself than a royalty advance.

Did I tell you that on the strength of Mrs. Lake's article in the Fort Worth paper, quite a few pilgrims headed in at Melrose yesterday. Although I like nice pilgrims, we really don't need any in particular, but it is good to know that the Lake article got customers, for she may do as well when I set her to work on a Clemence Show, if and when, to paraphrase Life, that thing gets arranged in Fort Worth.

We for those Marshall-Wace belles, nothing comes to hand from them. They certainly take the cork out of the bottle alright. Ordinarily it would seem strange that they never did acknowledge the rough draft of the Cane River article. Perhaps they thought it too bad to mention, and yet knowing them as I do, based on silence at the time of the April flood, I charge the whole thing off to the fact that they just don't write until they get around to actually making a move in some direction or other. It is wonderful if they can operate on such a method, but even though they may find that method satisfactory, - so far as they go, - I must say it doesn't suit me at all. I shall stop with one page in hopes of inclosing items mentioned above. Again my thanks on behalf of Arenbourg.....

1357

September 20th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I enclose a couple of letters which, if I recall correctly, are not of much importance, save as to give a flavor to the times.

It seems to me the one from Dora had a point or two in it, but as I recall the one from Lady Lake, hers was nothing special, save for the addresses which it might contain. I sent it along to Dora for copying those items, and shortly I shall bombard la Lake with particulars about Clemence in anticipation of a Fort Worth exhibit.

I don't want either letter back.

Our cool spell is over and I am glad for I have one of those summer colds that respond much more readily to sunshine and heat than to clouds and damps.

A letter to 'H. from Mrs. Rand in yesterday's post indicates that the ladies will head off for home early on this coming Sunday morning. You might say that will mark the official opening of the autumn season. Undoubtedly there will be much more animation about the place but certainly no more harmony than has pleasantly dominated everything during the past three weeks.

Sooner or later the house wherein I dwell will have to be jacked up considerably. One night during a big old storm, a few months back, it must have settled, - and all of a sudden, - about 4 or 5 inches. It made a report like the explosion of a cannon. Last night it settled further, and now some of the doors on the north side of the house open only part way. It will not be looked after before the crop is gathered, and will hold up alright for that length of time. After that I shall worry myself more about other houses, but in the mean time one gets quite a kick out of navigating in a house whose floors are at a 30 degree angle.

What with a lot of things I want to do down today, while there is an abundance of peace and quiet, I shall not join Dr. Knipmeyer after his call at Melrose, to go to Miss Sally's for dinner. The outing is always good, since it tends to eradicate a few cobwebs from y brain, but today I shall forego the pleasure and stick close to this keyboard and let the magnolia table groan without me.

1325

1358

While at the store yesterday, one of the young priests from St. Augustin chatted with me for a few moments. He said he had just been reading a book, - Blessed Are The Meek, - I believe he said the title is, - by some Polish number. It seems to be something about the 5th Crusade, - with possibly something about St. Francois d'Assisi. I reckon I shall never get around to read, - if and when I ever get my Reading Machine back, - but I certainly would like to know something about the Children's Crusade, - which I believe the 5th was.

I guess that was one of the rankest crimes ever committed in the name of religion, with thousands of children from all over Europe started off on a big old pilgrimage in the general direction of the Holy Land, - then in the hands of the Turks. Someone has said that the Children's Crusade was engineered by some Venetian merchants who were in commercial relations with the Turks. As I understand it vast amounts of the children were sold off into slavery and the whole business petered out completely. It certainly would be interesting to know just how much the Church and how much business associates of the Church, and how much the military leaders of the times had to do with those strange movements. What Charles and Mary Beard ought to do, - having long since done An Economic Interpretation of the American Revolution, - is to do another opus, - An Economic Interpretation of the Crusades.

The radio has much to say these days about Tokio versus Washington as regards the top men at present in those two places. From what I hear, - locally, - and stemming for the most part from the Capitol, is that the Tokio man, while an excellent military mind, is primarily a political number, and somehow current doings and sayings seem to confirm that idea. It will be interesting to see how things unravel between now and the next election. It is premature to say that the Presidential ticket might read: Truman versus McArthur, but some people seem to think that might well be in the cards.

Today at noon, old "Doc." Cross will be buried, - not in St. Mary's graveyard on Little River, but along side his papa and mama way up the road, some little distance beyond Bermuda, - and few will honor his passing. Old "Doc." was too hardy as an individual to be much beloved, and noon day in the middle of the week, - and at cotton picking time, with the weather fair, - is no time for a big funeral anyway. Now if it were hoeing time and hot and people were looking for an excuse to frolic, then there might be hopes for a large turn out. But this is something else again, - mid September, and so a few people will lay the old man away, and before very long everyone will have forgotten how in defiance of all known physical laws, their remarkably energetic man held off death for years and in complete disregard of Nature's customs, just went about his business, more of a personification of Mary Baker Eddy's Mind Over Matter than anyone I have ever known. Forgive a dull letter, - I may do worse next sitting.....

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1359

September 21st, 1945.
Memorandum to Clipping Service:

This morning I was confronted by a startling bit of news:

"You hear-ed they done killed God?"
Aurellia, that remarkable girl, had passed this way to bring me some breakfast. As near as I can figure it, she must have been making some inquiry from somebody or other as to the identity of Jesus, of whom I asked her particulars some time ago. Apparently there must have been some mix up in her mind or in that of her informer, so that Jesus and God came out to be the same person and that an end had been put to the latter.

Isn't it amazing how benighted one can be in this world (interruption) - but any way you slice it, such a statement was sufficient to take anyone a-back.

Another aspect of curious religious manifestations in these parts is to be found as a by-product of all this radio and newspaper space given some crack-pot out in California or some such place, regarding the end of the world, set for 9:30 this morning. It is an interesting commentary on how fast news gets around in this modern world that plenty of illiterate negroes are doing much speculation as to what is about to transpire, and the newspaper and radio space given this item seems to have shaken up a lot of fear in the minds of many a mulatto who ought to know better than to give it more than its amusing aspect, as implied by the press and the air. Yesterday one of the Balthazars, - not Sammy but Airey, approached me, visibly disturbed in soul. He confessed to me that he hadn't been to Church in years and that he had almost forgotten about confession. He had just read about the world coming to an end, however, and was greatly troubled. He asked me if I had mis-givings, and declared that if he should escape the end of things until Sunday, he most certainly was going to High Mass and to confession just as soon afterward as he could, and that he was never going to miss attending services again. Airey has a couple of boys in the service, - I mean he is that mature, and seemingly should have sense enough to give such business its proper place in the pattern of news flashes, but he is merely a sepia example of a world that reads headlines, swallowing them hook, line and sinker.

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The enclosed letter from one of the former "Weavin' Boys, is not very interesting. He is at Fort Halloran, - or some such place on Staten Island, where he has been with a group having something to do with the Prisoners of War in that area. It was interesting to learn that Kenneth would be out shortly, and I assume he will be passing by this way as he heads toward Denton.

The impending week has some sort of a business on the agenda for Tuesday. - I may have mentioned it, - I may not. There is to be some sort of doings in the drainage section of the pecane groves on Melrose, - off toward Little River, and Sam Jones is to be the main speaker, I believe. I mustn't forget to tell you how delighted Governor Bailey of Miss. was with the Sam Jones article entitled: Long Shadows over Louisiana.

The Knipmayers, - both Dr. and Mrs. - passed by yesterday, together with Mr. Alarich. They wanted to see my fine crop of bananas which, they heard was remarkable, - especially as the height of the plant itself seems to exceed anything noted elsewhere, either in Louisiana or South America. It made me laugh, and reminded me of that big old sunflower story with which I once regaled you. If I could only get those elusive ladies from Waco over here before the frosts come, I shall get them to "strike" a colored picture of the collection, which, if a blue sky and a big white cloud can be arranged to harmonize with the red of the brick chimney, the gray roof of the house, and the lovely green of the big banana leaves ought to be really quite nice.

But enough of all this, and my apologies for a dull letter.

First of all, let me say how much I appreciate the nice fat enclosure, containing particulars in regard to the de Mexieres. That is something I shall have the pleasure of exploring tonight, and doubly will you be at my side, not only for the data it contains, but also in the realization of all the labor of love which your transcription of this data represents. If your ears should be burning, as of Friday evening, there will be more than sufficient grounds, I am sure, for the day.

Naturally I was delighted to learn that you had listened to the Lessing business, and by this time you have been advised that I, too, was revelling in the brief half hour at the same time. Wont radio listening be grand when things get worked around so that perhaps everynight in the week we shall be able to tune in on such broadcasts? I have a feeling that such sort of programs aren't so far away, and I

1361

September 21st, 1945.

Memorandum to: Clipping Service

This is my second letter under even date, but I am going to impose a little further upon your good nature by further chatter because your nice letters have come to hand, - one of which I have had an opportunity to read, - and to which I shall respond, - and the other one will come in for consideration later today, - I hope.

As I stepped into the post office this morning to post a note to you, whom should I run into by Charles Mazurette, who had come up from Little River, bent on driving the clerk's car into town.

Would I go with him?

And so, without any further ado, we both took off forthwith.

There was a check up on last Friday's check-up which I wanted to attend to, but had not dreamed of such a splendid opportunity. And so I made the most of that and a couple of other little matters, and so back to Melrose by one o'clock.

There I found the mail awaiting me, and after saying goodbye to Charles, I stumbled over Mr. Brew at the garage, awaiting the beginning of the afternoon's labor at the gin. He withdrew to the shade of a pecane hard by, and there we ran through your letter, - and had just finished it, when the big old engine in the cotton section started turning, and Mr. Brew assured me that he would pass by my house later today, - or possibly tonight, depending upon when the gin shut down for the day.

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contemplate the absorption of such blessings with twice as much enthusiasm as I would have formerly, when I contemplate the further fact that eventually these may be shared at Arenbourg. After all, nothing in life is of much value unless shared, and somehow intellectual blessings are doubly prized if they come to one, - should I say if they come to two, when situated away off in the country. Somehow, for me, at least, the discussions of things intellectual in cities, somehow loses a lot of value, since too often major intellectual edifices, - too closely surrounded with extraneous additional sources, somehow take on aspects of lesser value than they actually possess. On the terrace at Arenbourg, however, where earth, water, air and sky are all seemingly united, - and there isn't too much artificial concepts of penitence kicking about, the real values in such discussions as appear on the invitation to learning programs, come out into the clarity of space in a manner that gives them much more of their real worth, unencumbered by the clashing non-essentials, or the excess of overlapping, as that so often becloud one in the deserts of intellectualisms, that automatically make themselves felt whenever there is too great a artificiality, - a short-circuiting of Truth.....

You were nice to say so many pleasant things about the article. It is good of you to tell me your re-action, for being so steeped in the setting and the facts, as I am at this place, it is of the greatest value to me to have someone like you to give me a true picture of your impressions to what might be stressed or lightened up on a little.

That you should have mentioned page 8 both pleases and confirms my impression that your understanding of the thing, - and my own - mis-givings on the thing are identical. Mrs. Pattison set that page aside in particular, pointing out at the time she returned the manuscript that on page 8 especially she had altered the script considerably. I am glad that you hit upon that particularly weak spot, for that will afford me an opportunity to go straight to that section of the article when opportunity presents someone with whom I may work on that part. As I have not had anyone to read the thing to me since it was typed, I am not at all certain as to any of the variations (without the t), but I recognize immediately that the sentence you quote is one of those which has been tampered with, and I am enchanted to have this especial one brought to my attention. I shall hold the article for a little while, hoping against hope that those Waco - Marshall belles will eventually bob up. I do believe that in a thing like The Saturday Evening Post, where the pictures of Grandpere, etc. could be reproduced in color, the article would be much better, as a mere explanation of the illustrations, but in the event those elusive ladies never do show up, I shall patch the thing a little more and send it along to some other magazine, - something say, like Harper's or The Reader's Digest.

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I pray you never to put yourself in the class of Dora, so far as correspondence goes and the fact that in one case days slip by without responses while in the other the replies that do come to hand are always so fulsome that they are over-abundant with such good cheer that they well last me, - from one to the other.

In Dora's case, I often think that not being too pressed for time, he does sometimes let quite a few extra days pass by without responding, whereas, as only too well do you know, a couple of million extra-curricular duties impinge, one upon the other, as the busy minutes of the day fall thick and fast, the one upon the other. As I have before remarked, and do here repeat, please don't ever feel rushed to take pen in hand in responding to my letters, - many of which are not so much items calling for responses as mere day-to-day jottings of what goes on locally, in order that you may keep abreast with these little segments, which, eventually, will somehow perhaps formulate a backdrop of more complete comprehension when things are right at Arenbourg and we undertake a couple of million things jointly.

I resume after dark, - although a nice mellow moon through the bananas eliminates the dark.

Mr. Brew read me your nice, nice letter immediately following the cessation of the day's activities. The stars were already beginning to twinkle and somehow the peace and quiet of the countryside, plus the general softness of the light and the pleasant perfumes of early autumn somehow united to bring the report and its writer ever so much closer to one's feelings. It was so special to read of the cotton plant in the Botanical Gardens which you found, supported by sticks and struggling along on its weak knees, while within arms length began, from where we sat, just acres and acres of the same kind of plant, as sturdy as could be. It was so good of you to give me particulars regarding the Marly Horses. I think I have mentioned to you before that the Victory Day pictures of la Place de la Concorde were so depressing, what with the two Coysevox items not on their accustomed pedestals. But now it turns out that they are intact and mounted again to their accustomed places. I have followed them so painstakingly in their long trip from Rome, via ship, to Port Marly and thence to Marly-le-Roi, and then a hundred years later to the entrance to the Champs Elysees, that I really have become fond of them as one becomes fond of any inanimate object, long accustomed to seeing, - and liking. I don't ever expect to go to Europe again, but if I should, - or at least so it seems at the moment, - it would be enough to make it by air for a week end, - visiting the Marly horses for a moment, and thence on to Versailles to spend a long, long day, taking the plane back to America on the following. It's quite a hop to see a dead horse, but then you know how curious some people are.

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I was equally glad to learn of the Mayerling business, too. I had completely forgotten about Stephenie, and I don't recall ever knowing that she had subsequently re-married and lived on the fine 8,000 acres estate in Hungary. I hope much of it was more productive than some of the vast holdings which go to make up estates in this locality.

It is strange how the economic circle, for example, in this area goes round and round. Before the Civil War, large speculators bought up great tracts, with a view to selling them off when cotton culture reached one new locality or another. Following the war, a new set of speculators bought the same large tracts with a view to cleaning up in some other line of departure, - lumber, or some such. Today the same business goes on, with oil as a possibility supplying the "come-on". The other day, on pretty good authority, I learned that J. H. had some staggering acreages in this Parish alone, - it seems to me it was 15,000 acres, or it may have been 25,000.

I also learned that the boys have agreed that as soon as Pat has finished L. S. U., - within 4 years, if military business doesn't get in between, - Pat will take over the operation of Melrose, and I assume that J. H. will devote himself exclusively to business other than planting.

At all this is parenthetical to the news about Stephenie. I recall that you once read a life of the Empress Elizabeth, her mother-in-law. I don't remember having heard you mention anything special in that volume about her. Vaguely in mind there is something about a Charity Bazaar in Paris (interruption) - something about a fire in Paris when a Charity Bazaar was the scene of death for a number of socially prominent people, and it seems to me that Stephenie had something to do about that Ball, but it must be she survived that disaster.

It is sweet of you to share the winter things with us at this time and it is nice to know that you are including the shoes along with the other items, for shoes are at a great premium in these parts. They are expensive, too, and what with a short cotton crop, many a lad will have to pinch himself twice to get the whithal to acquire foot wear for school this winter. Of course a lot of the people go barefoot as long as the weather holds fair, but when the wintry weather starts, shoes are almost imperative, and I may remark that it doesn't take long for soles to wear out, what with the Bermuda Road being gravelled and a distance (round trip) of from 6 to 8 miles to be trudged daily.

I must stop at this point and undertake a couple of other things, in preparation for the return of the patient on Monday, or rather on Sunday. More on the morrow, and in the mean time a million thanks for a billion joys.

Yours truly,
Francois Mignon

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September 24th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I guess we shall have to let the enclosure from James act as a letter in this case, since time is against much "desk-work" this morning.

You will be interested to learn that the Madam returned yesterday evening, - Sunday. She looked greatly improved. She didn't sound so. I think the trip did not turn the trick. That is my first impression after seeing her but a short time. My opinion on the matter will be confirmed or altered later today when contact has been established more thoroughly.

One hopeful sign was the fact that she quoted her Hot Springs' physician as saying she should return to the Springs within six months, - and she seemed to like that idea. I think that is something that will be necessary, - with increased frequency, as time goes on.

I told her I had received a card from you, stating that the uncle department had naturally made great drains on your time and energy but that you had thought of us often and that you had been so fortunate as to find a copy of the Van Dyke book which would probably arrive in today's post. She seemed genuinely glad to hear from you, and asked me to send all her love and advise you to go slowly and not try to write in such difficult times. She said she herself wasn't writing to anyone because it was too exhausting. For your own information, her reaction in your direction seems to be most kindly. Sister came by before her Mother arrived yesterday, complaining that she hadn't written her a line in months, - and that during the past three weeks she hadn't heard a word from her, save from post cards from Mrs. Pattison. It seems she writes to no one. I know that she didn't even write J. H.

Alright, that is that department, and it looks like much the same pattern just ahead.

I told J. H. yesterday that I proposed to get her to "assist" in planting Arenbourg, although in reality that was merely a subterfuge to get her into the road. He thought it a fine idea.

I have given much thought to Arenbourg of late, especially in regard as to selecting one building, or the other, to put a roof on and to make habitable temporarily. The small cabin is pretty much nothing but a frame, - but the frame is wonderful. That should get a tin roof on it as early as possible. The other house, - the one in the picture of the youth with his horse, is larger and in better condition, but requires a new roof, too, I think.

1366

This latter building will have to eventually be turned a little so that it will face more southerly than westerly, and some kind of beaverboard or some such composition will have to be introduced to seal the inside. I am under the impression that if I undertake the alterations advisedly, quite a lot of it can be accomplished with the estate carrying most of the job.

For that reason, - and because of the mental upset of last summer at the time Ora left, - not his mental, - but his hostess's, - I should rather prefer to get Arenbourg pretty well along before he came here to live. I am accordingly watching the block of time fall in where they may, hoping that the general pattern will work out as well as could be hoped by not trying to control the development and the settling of the place in advance of day to day happenings.

Yesterday I bought up the Arenbourg planting, as much with a view to jog J. H.'s memory to get the "etoyers" out of the place as soon as possible, - and also with a view to getting some "must" alterations made just as soon as the gather of the crop is finished and tractors and men will be available.

Eugene, - the former store clerk, - after 4 years of war, is back again, having returned to his home in Cloutierville yesterday. I think he will be employed in some other "enry" project other than the former position, - I hope.

Dan "enry" is out of the Army and awaits a boat in Honolulu. That factor may also color things locally for a while, - domestically.

And these two factors were supposed to tie up with something or other, but the point eludes me momentarily. In the mean time, I figure that six months hence will about take us into February, which is an ideal time for moving many plants, and should things go nicely between now and then, the grounds should be pretty much in order for such business, and Hot Springs will call my helper, so that I shall be able to accomplish much without even having to say No to suggestions.

Simply must skip at this moment. The weather holds good and it continues warm, but somehow there is a hint of Fall in the air. Tomorrow Sam "ones and a hundred other will be here to inspect the Melrose drainage ditches, etc., and a big time is expected in the food department, back in the pecane groves,

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September 25th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:
Nightly, at 10:15, over Station WHO, Des Moines, comes the very excellent broadcast by W. M. Nelson, who prefaces his account of the news in a deep voice, with these somewhat ominous, if not terrifying words:
"These are the latest developments."

I have nothing ominous or terrifying to report this morning, and yet that thought from Des Moines runs through my mind, and at the same time I recall that Woodrow Wilson, as a boy, was wont to spend an hour each day with his father, at the conclusion of which, young Wilson was asked to write down an account of the subjects covered in the conversation, keeping them in their proper order of value, with no exaggerations and no understatements.

With these two factors in mind, - a presentation of the latest developments, plus an attempt to give them their true proportions, that is the difficulty that confronts me. As indicated in my report of yesterday, Hot Springs did not turn the trick. Our patient seems rather more on the gay side, but although obviously stronger than before leaving Melrose, she moved about but little, remaining all day on her sofa. Having been away from home, conversation turned on things far a-field. That is always good, since it prevents her from getting local situations out of line in her mind. But when it came time for dinner, she decided she was going to eat in her room. I ate with her. She said she would come down stairs for supper. It was hot during the day, but a good shower in the afternoon cooled things off considerably. Come supper time, and she decided she would not go down stairs. Always, in the past, after returning from an absence of a day or a week, her strongest desire has been to look over the gardens. She now returns after three weeks, apparently quite indifferent to what is doing in the horticultural department. Usually she has undertaken a flock of notes, immediately upon her return to Melrose. Yesterday she asked me to write notes to you and to Caroline Dorman, to Stephen Henry, Joe, Dan and others. This is all I shall have to say on this point for the moment, and I trust it gives some idea of how we head into the autumn season.

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I list the above items at the top of the page so you may the more readily detach it, if you care to. St. Amand is a writer of whose work I may not have spoken frequently to you, and yet I know not why, since I have long liked him ever so much. I reckon I haven't read a book of his in 15 years, and yet, - if my taste has not changed considerably, I think I still like him a lot.

A number of years ago, his works were translated into English, - and possibly American, and the translation was so good that I liked them rather better than in the original.

I think you might stumble over some of his works, - in their English translations, almost any old time. (interruption). I mention the above titles as being ones, if memory hasn't slipped a cog, that I liked particularly well.

I am under the impression that you might find these items at about 10 or 25 cents, since they probably have but limited appeal.

When I used to read them, I did so because I loved Versailles and the 18th century, - the century of Voltaire, Mme. de Pompadour and of Lessing. I still would like them for the same reason, but for this added point: -

They are as integral a part in the perfect understanding of Louisiana as books on Louisiana itself. Too frequently, as I consider the libraries I have known, devoted to Louisiana, and to often, as I consider the writers of Louisiana, I find that the books have been devoted exclusively to Louisiana and the writers, with a few rare exceptions, - such as Gayarre, etc., have known little or nothing of the outside world or of 18th century Europe, - and in consequence, their writings have been totally without the necessary flavor which is necessary to make Louisiana the delicious piece of pie it really is.

And so, in mentioning the St. Amand volumes, - there are a great many, I think, - and none of them have any reference to the new world, I do so with a view to making preparations far in advance for the Arenbourg Library. For Arenbourg should devote itself largely to the Lower Mississippi Valley, and in so doing, it is bound to embrace of all of 18th century Europe, - plus the last half of the 17th century, - or it is a picture of the times and the place without any coloring, without any background.

And while on the general subject of books, I must mention another volume which is quite interesting, - quite one sided, as I recall, but altogether fascinating in its details and particulars of that segment of French history, sandwiched in between the XIV and the XV Louis. It is an American publication, -

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France Under the Regency by Perkins.

It also is a book that would be but slightly read, and might be picked up, by some rare chance, on the bargain counters now and then.

The most fascinating section of it is that part devoted to The Mississippi Bubble.

As I remember it, there was an excellent account of the speculation that went on at such a mad rate under John Law, when shares of the Mississippi enterprise made millionaires out of scullions and paupers out of princes.

The above items will be books that will never appear on the reading machine, but there is a good chance that on long damp winter evenings at Arenbourg, comfortably seated before a cozy fire and fortified with some pleasant beverage, one may share these counter-parts of old Louisiana with relish, and that a thorough digestion of the American chapter of the 18th century will be the more satisfying and complete, when backed up by such tomes which in themselves are a delight, with or without relationship to anything else.

There was some other point I wanted to touch upon, but it eludes me momentarily, and what with a crowd of people in the offing, - for the barbecue, I shall have to fold up about now.

You will forgive such a lop sided, literary discussion, and for my part I shall try to get back into more perfect balance at my next sitting.....

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September 25th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The enclosed card is sent merely for the printed notation that appears on the front, - something about sanitary white attendants, which is quite good, I think.

Yesterday was a full day, and the daily drizzle held off until long after the festivities were over, so that things turned out very nicely.

The cavalcade of planters, Federal and State officials, etc., arrived about 11. Cheer was dispensed in the the store, and one had an opportunity to meet old friends and to make new ones.

I chanced to be on the store gallery when ex Gov. Sam Jones arrived and J. H. introduced me immediately upon greeting him.

I told Mr. Jones that I would waive reference to his political accomplishments but would pass along a good word, as expressed by Gov. Bailey of Mississippi, on his literary attainments, especially his article of last autumn entitled "Long Shadows over Louisiana". I guess reference to his writing, - in such a group at least, has been infrequent, and he seemed pleased. He is a short, rather on the plump side, kindly person, easy to talk with and interested, apparently, in everything. I enjoyed my little chat with him.

A little before 12, perhaps 200 people and groups of people had arrived, and J. H. sought me out and said: "Let's go", - and so we headed off toward Little River, driving deep into the grove of pecanese. Several trucks had been drawn up in the shade of some trees, and tables were piled high with food, - barbecue beef, potatoe salade, etc., etc. Further along were trucks with iced drinks, - Coca-Cola, beer, etc.

There were two or three addresses of welcome, - brief ones.

Then a long line was formed, - it moved rather leisurely but sufficiently smoothly to avoid any stalling, and each person passed by the automotive buffet, selecting his own food or having attendants serve him at will. And once fortified with ample stores, one joined little knots of men who, for the most part, used the ground as a resting place and a tree trunk as support for resting his back. That made for informality, intimacy and comfort, and the picnic was a success.

(over)
on the day...
the exterior of the house...

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It was during this period that Mr. Jones contacted me, referring to what I mentioned early about Gov. Bailey, and asking me if I ever visited Mississippi much. I confessed that I had in times gone by, and he then asked if I had ever heard much about the Natchez Trace, and I confessed affirmatively again. He wanted to know points about it, - historically and its present political and economic aspects. I told him what I knew. He was kind enough to say that this was the first time it had ever been made clear to him, both as to its ante bellum nature and the relation of that aspect of it to the present talk about the highway.

I told him quite frankly that I had heard it rumored that he was being groomed for the office of Louisiana U. S. Senator, and that I hoped he would be successful, and if so, I hoped the word Natchez Trace would appear in his Senatorial Speeches, and that there were some purely State subjects, - an Archives Department in Baton Rouge, of which I should speak to him at some more appropriate time and place.

About this time, the eating part of the picnic was concluded, and it was time for the speech making, and so that ended our conversation for that sitting.

Most of the speeches were about drainage, - the day's meeting having been based on the ditches and canals dug during the past year on Melrose, - and the best of these talks were by Mr. Jones. I was impressed by one statement he made relative to the eventual drying up of tax moneys, currently gathered from oil and natural gas production in Louisiana, - the parallel in my mind being between that statement and one made by Sargent Prentiss in the 1840's or 1850's, wherein that Mississippi Senator predicted that one day Miss. would lose its first place in cotton production to Texas or some other State and that thought should be given as to what would re-place the staple as a means of wealth for the citizens of the State.

Eventually I shall find that speech, quote from it, and include it in a note to Gov. Jones. I think he will like it and possibly make use of it, - and besides, it will do no harm to do a little correspondending with that gentleman.

Following the various speeches, the crowd divided into two parts, - those who wanted to tour the drainage system and those who wanted to inspect the pecane groves. I thought this made a perfect exit for me, and so I headed out toward home on foot. It was hot and I was all a-drip when I arrived. Accordingly I stoked up some fire in my heater and within a short space of time, - but perhaps an hour or so after quitting the picnic, - what with the 2 or 3 mile walk following, I plunged into my bath.

In the midst of that business, I heard the bell on my gate jingle, and lo! there was J. H. and a group of perhaps 20 of the officials who had taken part in the festivities. Not unlike Venus arising from the sea, I emerged from the waters, unhooked my screen doors, and greeted the gentlemen on the gallery. J. H. said he had no intention of disturbing me and merely wanted the men to see the exterior of the house, - its mud walls, etc., but I insisted

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that he bring them in to view the "family portraits", as we always style the mulatto portraits that adorn the walls of this house.

And so we had another short round of chatter and laughter, and with me in my bathrobe looking more like a deplumed chicken than thanthing else, I imagine.

And so that part of the day was done, - what with their departure, with a final inspection of the banana plants along my front gallery which one man said he didn't believe was true as to high height and vigorousness, even though he saw them plainly before his own eyes. They really are surpassing anything I have ever seen, and strangely enough without any especial care having been given them. I guess they are just another manifestation of that sunflower business of childhood of which, I think, I have spoken to you before.

As for my patient, she seems to be following out my original snap judgement that Rot Springs did not turn the trick. All day yesterday she seemed to be in a pretty good humor, but remained in her hightown all day, never even putting on her stockings. She remained on her sofa until about 7 p.m., when she transferred from it to her bed. I assume that unless cooler weather gives her much added vitality, she will continue to sag slowly. I guess another round to Rot Springs during the early winter cannot be far from contemplating as a foregone conclusion.

A letter from Dan Henry reports that he is in Los Angeles, having reached there from the Hawaiian Islands a day or two ago. He speaks of going on to Fort Sam Houston, - somewhere in Texas, and thence to Melrose about October 1st. J. H. says he is not out of the Army, but this seems like an awfully long trip for a mere furlough. We shall see. The Mada has mis-givings as to the probability that he will take up drinking heavily, once he is back, - so many of the soliders, - or rather ex-soliders, in this area seem to be inclined in that direction. Well, we shall cross that bridge when we come to it.

Both in the morning and in the afternoon, or rather the evening, while I sat with my patient, she spent ever so much time speaking of the development of Arenbourg and wanting me to undertake it just as soon as the Metoyers move. Ostensibly I am not over zealous, and the more I incline toward holding back, the more she urges me to get going. This is a very pleasant aspect, as I had not been quite sure what the reaction would be. Apprantly, however, it is all to the good.

I telephoned Miss Culver on the Madam's behalf yesterday morning. I found her at the Library Commission in Baton Rouge, and she says she is heading up this way for a few day's visit about the second week in October. So be it.

(over)

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On Thursday we are scheduled to have some other people from Baton Rouge, a Mrs. Evans and a couple of other bags, none of whom I have ever seen but some of whom seem to know me, or at least have heard tell.

The clerk, - Billy Hinton, is a nice person, and something of a cabinet maker when not busy at the store. Yesterday he somewhat sheepishly asked me if he dared asked me a question about the openings from the Jean Baptiste Metoyer house. I allowed as how I thought he could. Well, it seems that he has eyed the large door, - the one with the places for 36 panes, with great yearning, wanting to try his hand at putting it back into first class condition, - for of course it has suffered during the years. Naturally I was enchanted at his wish to do something with it, for that will put its installation at Arenbourg that much closer, and I know he will perform a labor of love on it that will be superior to anything anyone else would do. And so he is moving it from the old store, where it is currently housed, and once at his home, he will make merry with his spare time at nights and on week end, making it just as elegant as it was originally.

The original lock from the door is missing, but I have negotiated with Bill Illorenze, currently operating the Melrose garage, for the lock and key which Harold Meziere borrowed from the Louis Metoyer (Melrose) house, when he operated that same garage. There is nothing particularly special about that lock and key, save that it is original, - about 1830, I should say, and the key, while plain, is striking in that the item is about six or eight inches long, and somehow will go very nicely with the size of the door itself.

Mist gallop for the moment.....

Both in the morning and in the afternoon, or rather the evening, intended to say yesterday that The Other Wise Man arrived on schedule on the 24th and that the Madam was altogether enchanted with the edition.....

I telephoned Mrs. Mignol on the Madam's behalf yesterday morning. I found her at the library, and she was a bit of a mess, and she says she is heading up this way for a few days' visit about a second week in October. So be it.

(over)

1374

September 27th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To hand your most excellent report, especially covering a number of situations and personalities of mutual interest, and it is a great pleasure to take pen in hand to say thanks to you for all the labors therein represented.

I laughed at your respective accounts of Herr Blimp and Herr Chipmunk. Herr Blimp, from your description, must somehow resemble something of a cross between Herr Luther and Herr Churchill, with a strip from the funny papers thrown in for good measure. I am glad that they both found good jobs, however, because for a lot of people food and drink are the two things in life that matter, and thus provided with what it takes to provide that, they are secure in the little worlds in which they move. After all, that no doubt is what provides happiness for them, and happiness is the thing everyone seeks most, and they are assured that, with never a threat of grand sorrows and never the promise of celestial joys, - just a dead level on which they may travel to a very secure but a very dull termination of their existence.

My patient has gone through her third day at home in much the same fashion as the preceding ones. She did dress yesterday, but spent the entire day in her room. I dined with her and our conversation was general, but rather on the gay side. She speaks frequently of getting to work on Arenbourg, saying she thinks I should undertake it just as soon as possible. I concur. I think, - in fact, I am sure, that in the back of her mind she feels that eventually the place will be rather nice, and that eventually, when I am done with it, it may pass to someone like Pat. It may, of course, but I reckon she may not remember, - perhaps has never known - that one clause in the property transfer provides for it to pass to another for life use, should I fold up my beard before all the magnolias have come into bloom. "Are you listenin'?"

It is good to have this sedentary expression of enthusiasm, however, and it will eventuate in the accomplishment of many things with much greater facility. My most pressing problem is to get all these things done at the earliest opportunity, in order that things may jell, if possible, before Dora's advent. And so I shall endeavor to hold him off as long as possible, while laboring with as much speed as possible, hoping in the end that a perfect co-ordination may see much accomplished precisely at the moment he moves in this direction.....

1375

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The weather continues in the upper 80's, and the nights are clear although moonless. I am walking a little later than usual, temporarily, what with an absence of entertainment at home. When my patient left for the Springs, she asked if I would mind using her large radio during her absence, while she took my small one along for entertainment while away. It made no difference to me, of course, except that when she returned, I re-instated her machine in her room, and had mine back, - deadlier than a doornail. Accordingly it has been sent to Alexandria for repair, and I am told I may be able to get in within the next couple of weeks. I am afraid I shall accordingly miss this coming Sunday's Invitation to Learning.

And speaking of the latter program, I think I failed to mention my reaction to last week's half-hour on Dryden. To me, that program represented a fine example of what happens when people, isolated from humanities, get together to discuss something in their own pet field. I knew nothing much about Dryden before they began discussing him, - and little more after they had finished. Somehow they failed to tie in the writings of the man with either the times that he lived or the effects of his writings on subsequent people or events. It was all too rare, - like a group of chemists discussing a gas which the listening layman had never heard nor would ever see, and probably never be much affected by, - one way or the other.

For the most part, the discussions of Invitation to Learning are excellent because they usually bring the subject, - even though new, within the grasp of the average listener, and when they are finished, one has much to think about and a desire to explore. I guess that is why Dr. Butler's Tuesday lectures in Hatcher were and are so precious, because one carries away a whole flock of ideas and desires which have been created by the master craftsman who has arranged them for him who runs to read.

Last Sunday on the Dryden hour, when they spoke of the political poems, they slid over a big point, I thought, when someone remarked: "Of course, we haven't time to mention the political setting which occasioned this poem". That is where the purely literary mind fell flat on its face, it seemed to me, since it evidenced the thought that for too many students, - scientists, etc., there is often the error that the material with which they deal has no relation to the rest of life, - as though the stuff were something reserved in a vacuum tube, to be examined as a curiosity and not as an integral part of the great mosaic which properly placed in a correct position, is necessary to the complete understanding of life itself.

It would certainly sound silly to hear a group of people undertake a discussion of, say, The Declaration of Independence, - and blandly remark: "Of course, we haven't the time to touch upon the political aspects obtaining in the 1770's, - the situations which occasioned the creation of this document."

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Just one more swing at this thing, and then I shall be done.

A few weeks back, when discussing the atomic bomb, one or two of the people on the Invitation to Learning Hour remarked that in the past, scientists had often withdrawn themselves from the rest of humanity and worked in a little world, - set apart by themselves, as though it had no relation, as though they had no relation or responsibility, to the rest of creation. The point stressed at that time was that there is no fight as between Science and Christianity, between mechanics and morals, but on the contrary, there is the closest kinship, - and unless we can knead these several branches of human endeavor into one universal whole, then atomic bombs will be exploding in the wrong places and civilization will be going to pot because the scientist will have created a Frankenstein that Religion cannot handle.

Poor you! Afraid to skip a line for fear you might, by some magic, run into something interesting, and yet arriving at the end of this diatribe without having stumbled over anything at all, must get a little note off to Sam Jones this morning, calling his attention to the remarkable parallel between a section of his pecan grove speech of Tuesday and one made by Sargent Prentiss a hundred years ago. I think I referred to this in yesterday's note to you. Things prevented me from getting at it then but I am determined to rip it off this morning.

About this time of year, the butterfly lily department takes a new lease on life that is very interesting. Not always, but sometimes, the roots, - which look astonishingly like unboiled lobsters, send up, by some supreme effort, a huge stalk, where upon, at the top, the butterfly burst into astonishing bloom, - a dozen or so at a time. I have been selecting some of these fine bulbs for Arenbourg planting in January. I must fold up at this point as people have come for one thing or another, and I must gallop.

1377

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they produce, as a substitute for coffee, makes her feel like a new person, and she seems better than ever.

September 28th, 1945.

My dear Mr. Brew: I am so glad to hear from you, and I am sure you are well.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Thanks a heap for your nice letter and for the package, sent from mid-Manhattan, which came to hand nicely.

Since Mr. Brew will be reading, you might skip reference to individuals who received the shipment. The gin worked until dark last night, Mr. Brew being engaged in that operation, and so I walked over to his uncle's house, - Fugabou, - and asked him to drop by. I went over the various items in the package, and he was enchanted and a little floored by all the fine array of things. He thought one pair of the gloves would be nice for his daughter, Helen, who will be starting in school again this coming month. She does not go to St. Mathew's up here on Cane River, but rather to St. Augustin's, (with an e) on Little River. That is the Rosenwald school along side St. Augustine's Church out yonder. Helen goes to Little River on Sunday nights and comes home Friday night. She stays with her grandfather, Jules Remo, who lives on Mr. Charlie's place, near St. Mary's Church. That is Helen's part. Then her brother, - Junior Fugabou, who is a curious looking boy, - an albino, will get the other pair.

Maude, Fugabou's wife will get one of the dresses, the light colored one, while Sis, Fugabou's mama, and Mr. Brew's grandmother, with whom Fugabou lives, - next door to Fugabou, will have the coat and the dark dress. Sis is a thin, thin black darkie, about 5 feet 5 inches in height. She is very poor and has no coat, so when October starts cooling things off a bit, she will be able to get to the store and to one house or another where she does a little work without the rigors of being chilled to death, as she usually is.

I have been doctoring Sis for some time! Imagine. Somehow coffee doesn't agree with her and frequently in the morning especially, it seems that her heart slows up alarmingly without the stimulant that coffee affords. Accordingly I lied and told the Madam I needed a stimulant early in the morning and that I should like some caffeine tablets. I got a thousand of them, and so I dole them out in 15 tablet doses. Sis has been using them for six months and the effect

is very good. She is now able to get up in the morning without any trouble, and she is now able to get to the store and to one house or another where she does a little work without the rigors of being chilled to death, as she usually is.

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they produce, as a substitute for coffee, - although she doesn't know their nature, makes her feel fine. I assume that trust in her physician adds to the psychological effect, and she seems better than in years.

As all the above has to do with the family of Mr. Brew, you might skip reference to it.

I might add, in reference to the above, that Fugabou most particularly asked me to tell "that lady", - meaning you, how much all these fine things mean for him and his family, as he is trying "to school" his children, - since he neither reads nor writes, and that he wants to thank you himself one of these days when he sees you, as I assure him he will.

A detail I might add is the fact that Fugabou is one of the expert tractor drivers and prize chauffeur on prolonged jaunts, and that his devotion is 100 per cent. It won't be long before the terrace at Arenbourg will be ready for a going over, the drive to be created by the same agency, and the artificial swan lake to be dug. The tie that already binds this family to us is strong. This thoughtfulness on your part in the matter of clothes will in no way lessen that tie.

Our patient continues on the droopy side. Yesterday she did not dress. There were quite a few callers, - Dr. and Mrs. Knipmayer in the morning, - some more people I have forgotten, and in the afternoon, three ladies, - and rather on the dull side, from Baton Rouge. Just as they arrived, Dan Henry arrived from Baton Rouge or rather from Hawaii, - which isn't the same thing exactly.

I had quite a long talk with him and quite interesting were the details he had to relate covering that place during the past three years. His mother, of course, did not come down stairs for either dinner or supper. This morning, according to the servant she is not feeling very peppy. She folded up at 6 o'clock, and told me she proposed to take liberal doses of codine during the night. Dan Henry has a 56 day furlough and will be in the big house much of that time. I am glad someone will be under the same roof, although all the Henrys are great on tearing up and down the road, so as a constant companion, none of them are to be counted upon much.

The doctor came by this morning about 6 a.m., and he brought my radio with him, having had it repaired in Alexandria. I am glad to have touch with the outside world again. The reason for his early visit to Elrose was the fact, according to another servant, that Puny developed pneumonia during the night. As I understand it, pneumonia is readily eradicated now by use of the sulphur drug, so I reckon there is no need for worry. His stepson, Big Six was in the road last night, but didn't mention his father's illness. I reckon it came upon him fast. He is one of the king-pins at the gin, and I think the dust of the cotton isn't too good for him.

1379

I was ever so much interested in what you had to tell me regarding Life's account of the Pearl Harbor business. I did hear it mentioned on the air, but the Columbia news broadcasts are always so brief, - about 6 or 7 minutes at most, after the advertising is eliminated, that one gets but a passing glance at any situation they touch upon, - especially as they seem to love to tell you a flock of details, - when, as rarely, they go in for details. I cite such things as rattling off a whole flock of number of regiments or divisions or some such of troupes that may be expected to head out from Europe for home. As I don't know one regiment or division that embraces anyone I know, all those details might well be omitted and some detail of actual happenings in the world of news substituted.

I found it very interesting, the use of Navajo in code, and I can imagine it would be extremely difficult for any Jap to ever fathom such a strange goulash in the kilocycles. It seems to me that the idea was unusually clever, and I'll bet there was plenty of hair-pulling on the part of the Japs whose business it was to try to decipher such goings on.

Up to the present writing, the manuscript has never come to hand from Harmonson, and I must get a litter off in today's post in reference to it. In a round about way, - may I say, - I did learn that little Miss Ramsey is presently in South Louisiana, having recovered from her recent fevers. I must also get a line off to her at Morgan City, urging her to pass this way while the gin is still going full blast, in order that we may get the final touches on the cotton situation for the Cane River article. I especially want to have a good photo of a black, black negro handing a cotton bowl to a light, light mulatto. Strange how elusive that lady is, and yet she is all wool and a yard wide. As I may have remarked before, artist and negroes have one thing in common, - too often, and that is the very elements that make them what they are seem to include an unpredicable element which calls for a heap of patience. For myself, they are worth the effort of exerting the patience, but to people who do not feel that way, then that unfortunate characteristic of necessity rules them out of the average human orbit.

I must skip at this point, and thanks again, both from me and from Fugabou, - for all the nice things that come our way.....

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1881

September 29th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I shall begin this note bravely, although there is a chance I may not get far, since Caroline Dormonk who blew in last night, may decide to call on me early this morning, as may Charles "azurette", who will also appear from Little River, determined as he is, - as indicated by an earlier note this week, to head out for New Orleans today, - I suppose tonight, and so he will probably be arriving here with some clippings and all this morning. That is the situation! to quote Pierre.

It was good to have your note in yesterday's post, and I noted all particulars, personal and items from abroad, with keen interest.

While it flits through my mind, I will thank you particularly for advising me regarding the opening of the Galerie d'Apollon, - although the extra "a" in my spelling must read curiously.

I may have spoken to you in times gone by of my especial enthusiasm of that wonderful marble top table housed in that Galerie, - the one made up of squares measuring about one foot, wherein, and in each square, was a beautiful bird, inlaid in marble, - making it quite the loveliest thing of its kind in the world. As I recall, most of this elegant surface was hidden by some enormous glass case, containing the Crown jewels, - or some such, - a fact which in the old days I never attempted to do anything about, but which I think, from this far off situation, I shall attempt to amend, the next time I take pen in hand to run the Louvre a little bit.

The mention of the Regent Diamond, as being housed in the Galerie d'Apollon, surprised me, for I had been under the impression that it was always on display at the Chateau de Chantilly, one time home of the Princes of Conde. In the Perkins book, - France Under the Regency, of which I spoke in a recent report, I think there is some mention of the Prince of Conde hauling away several cart loads of gold from the Mississippi Company's offices in Paris, - gold which they had acquired by cashing in their stocks before that bubble burst, and I had always assumed that this gold might have been a possible source from which the Regent Diamond was subsequently purchased. As I recall, the Diamond was stolen a number of years ago, - say in the 1920's, when someone concealed it in an apple, but that it was subsequently returned to Chantilly.

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It was interesting to learn that so much treasure from the Louvre had been housed at Chambord and ~~the~~ Valencay (?), during the war. Chambord, you will recall, was once the home of the Marechal de Saxe, grandfather of Georges Sande, while Valencay was the home, - or perhaps is now the home, of Anna Gould, Duchesse de Talleyrand. I recall a good description of the place in the Lacour-Gayet 4 volume work, Prince de Talleyrand, and if memoray serves, either Illustration or Plaisir de France, had some lovely photographs in color of the courtyard of Valencay, much white marble background, with a greensward in the foreground, where on elegant scarlet ibis lent just the proper color note to the whole business.

You ask about the cotton set up locally, and how the thing works. Well, here is a brief sketch. I shall for convenience divide the thing into two parts, - the first with the use of the share crop method, - which the negroes prefer, and the second, without that method:-

In the Spring, a hand living on the place arranges with the owner that he will take a certain strip of land to word, - say two acres, say 10 acres. The owner furnishes the ploughing or not, as the tenant prefers. If tractors or machinery owned by the planter is used, a small charge for its use is made. The planter also furnishes the hand with seed, as well as food and clothing as he may need it during the season. The cotton is planted either by the hand alone, - or if he wishes, by the aid of the plantation machinery. The hand undertakes to hoe the patch and keep it clean. When it comes "cotton time", - which is now, the hand picks his own cotton, and it is hauled to the gin, where it is weighed before and after ginning, and the whole matter put on the account of the hand. The value of the cotton is figured as a separate account, just as the cotton by another planter who brings his cotton to the Melrose gin, - and after the crop is finished, deductions are made from materials and services advanced, and the hand is given the balance. I must say that at Melrose, the nerys enjoy the fullest confidence of the negroes who share-crop, for weights and costs are really figured impersonally and fairly.

At the present time, cotton sells roughly around 20 cents a pound. The average bale weighs 500 pounds. It requires about 1,300 to 1,500 pounds of cotton to produce a bale weight 500 pounds. The balance of the weight is in the cotton seed, averaging about two thirds of the 1,500 pounds. Cotton seed brings about 40 to 45 dollars a ton at present. Of course the hand is paid both for the lint - the bale, - and for the seed.

In this region, a fair crop would be about one bale to the acre, and in a good year, a man with his wife and say three children, might produce from 6 to 10 bales. After costs of cultivation have been deducted, there is a neat cash balance, to tide the man over until next year although usually he likes to put his money in an old car or some personal gadget, and after the 1st of the year, work at day labor, - building fences, etc., until next planting time. That is the share crop method, as practiced in these parts.

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The other method, is straight day labor, wherein the planter employs the hand to prepared th soil, plant, and the man and his family, to hoe and to pick. In the latter occupation, at the present time, a dollar and a half is paid for picking. A good picker can pick about 200 or 250 pounds a day.

But of course a scarcity of cotton or adverse weather may eliminate much opportunity for steady picking, and so, as in the case of the share cropper, the variations of the weather plays a large part in the success or failure of his hopes that center around cotton time.

For the most part it is imperative that the plantation carry both the share cropper and the day laborer over an extended period, so that by the time the final settlement is made, there isn't too much left for the individual to call his own.

One very heartening thing on this place is the fact that accounts are always rendered immediately, with no waiting for cash and no fussing over charges, etc. The accounts are kept up to the minute, and the moment a man has ginned his cotton, he may get his slip, indicating the weights, etc., and go immediately to the store and after deductions for just advances have been made he can walk out of the place with his money in his pocket.

Once, and only a few years back, Melrose maintained about 40 to 50 mules, for use in the cotton fields. Now I think there are perhaps 6 pretty much moth eaten animals. Tractors have replace horse flesh and manual labor. I am under the impression that before the cotton picker, - mechanical, - gets perfected, there may be little or no use for it, although I am not certain. I understand that successful experiments have been made wherein cotton is planted in one row, broom corn in the next, and the whole crop cultivated by hoeing, but no cotton ever picked. Instead, a very heavy mowing machine is put into the field, mowing down the cotton and broom corn alike, and the whole thing baled up as hay, sent off to a mill, not unlike a pulp mill, and the whole thing treated with some chemicals, and eventually turned out into some remarkable rayon, embracing the absorbant qualities of cotton and the enduring properties of symthetic cloth. At the moment the whole industry is poised on something like this, and if that should come along, of course, factories or some other means of employment must be found to take up the unskilled labor which up to now has made its existence primarily on the cotton picking part of the business.

There were a couple of other points, but I must skip at the moment, for things are starting to turn.

I enclose letters from Dora and Miss Robins, - neither of which I think are of much interest. Dora's is certainly brief. Miss Robins refers to a folder for which I asked. It concerns some restoration work in Little Rock which I should like to mull over to see if it can in any way be applied to Natchez. Must skip... for a while. I am sure you are tired.

a large part in the success or failure of his hopes that center
 around cotton time.

much left for the individual to call his own. So that by the time the final settlement is made, there isn't too much left for the share cropper and the day laborer over an extended period for the most part it is imperative that the plantation carry

which up to now has made its existence primarily on the cotton and it that should come along, of course, factories or some other means of employment must be found to take up the unutilized labor of cotton and the underlying properties of synthetic cloth. At the moment the whole industry is based on something like this, whole thing treated with some chemicals, and eventually turned as they went off to a mill, not unlike a ship mill, and the cotton and woolen cloth alike, and the whole thing came up collected by nothing, but no cotton ever picked, instead, a it is planted in one row, bloom down in the next, and the whole crop stems that successful experiments have been made wherein cotton little or no use for it, although I am not certain. I understand the cotton picker, - mechanical, - gets perfected, there may be are perhaps 6 pretty much more eaten animals. These have regular 40 to 50 miles, for use in the cotton fields. Now I think there once, and only a few years back, Mexico maintained about

There were a couple of other points, but I must skip at the moment; for things are starting to turn.

even though not much can be done for him because of his untimely death and unchangeable nature. Well, Peter had been shot, and that was that, and was sent on his way and then in half an hour broadcast returned to the office and the matter, and following me that last night, I had had been shot. In the time, I had left and as I was a little taken back to see a - - - - - .

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I have just listened to Invitation to Learning, and thinking of you throughout as I did, I somehow found myself every moment hoping that we were sharing it together.

As last week's session on Dryden fell short of what I considered a good session, this week's half hour accomplished precisely what I think it should, - at least so far as I was concerned; - it acquainted with me with Schliman (?), it made me want to know more about him and it suggested some of his won works and his biography by Ludwig for me to further inform myself.

Q. There was but one statement in the whole proceedings which I questioned, and it is always well to have one or two of those at hand. At least. That was the statement, - or the impression that I got, that Archeology had its inception with the gentleman under discussion, - and the year 1871 was mentioned as about the time Archeology got to going. I think I may have misunderstood this point, for we all know that Archeology is pretty much older than that. Flying back as I so frequently do, to the 18th century, I recall that the uncovering of the ruins of Pompeii in the middle of that century was what gave the inspiration to Mme. de Pompadour to build the Petit Trianon after the manner that she did. And of course B. L. C. Wales interest in Indian Mounds and their excavations in the 1840's and 1850's is but one person's activity in a field in this country wherein Archeology was not unknown. But all that is merely incidental and a foot note. I thought the program today was grand and I am sure you felt the same sense of satisfaction, if you were so fortunate as to hear it.

As I have before mentioned, Saturday night is always the big night on Cane River. Last night was ever the same. My friend, Peter, with doubtful attributes of value, save that he has something about him that I like, passed by my house about first dark, and I walked with him for a piece up the road, - as far as Arenbourg, when I returned home. This morning, when Sam Peace passed this way with coffee, he told me that there was a little more racket at Sammy Balthazar's than usual about 11 p.m., and that Peter had been shot.

I guess I would have liked to help Peter out a little from time to time because Victoria, the one time cook at elrose, had died in 1938, leaving Peter a boy about 11 or 12, and I suppose I thought that somebody should have done a little more for him than has been done.

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even though not much can be done for him because of his unpredictable and undependable nature. Well, Peter had been shot, and that was that, and Sam went on his way and then in half an hour Breakfast arrived, Aurellia carrying the watter, and informing me that last night Peter had been shot. In due time, Aurellia left and as I took my first sip of chocolate, I was a little taken a-back to see a familiery form at the door, - of all people, - Peter.

It seems there was one of those so-called white deputies at Sammy's last night, and hill-billie in fact and in nature, a hill-billy seems to get great pleasure out of going to a Saturday night frolic exclusively made of colored people, and there trying to muddy the waters.

Curiously enough, it seems the bullet from the revolver had struck Peter at about the same place that old tick struck me a couple of months back, and Peter, badly bleeding, had been taken to a physician, patched up, and after a night's sleep, appeared none the worse for wear. He said he had drunk some rather bad whiskey early in the evening and that his head hurt. I gave him a large dose of Phillip's Milk of Magnesia and a couple of asperin, and sent him on his way. He will have the wound dressed again on Monday, and that will be about all there is to that episode.

Ready of smile and pleasant of nature, Peter probably gives the impression of having more native wint than he actually possesses. Once he told me he went to school, - one morning when he was a boy, - he is now 18 or 19, but he only staid about an hour. Once he told me his birthday was on the 18th of June, and he asked me if that was very near Christmas time. The Army rejected him, it was said at the time he was drafted, because of his heart. I know not if the Army thought he was too kind hearted or if they just told him that instead of refering to his inability to do anything about an I. Q. Be that as it may, the Army turned him down, and Peter, inspite of last night's near miss, is still with us, and no doubt at this moment is playing baseball or getting fixed up to "swing out", as they all refer to dancing at Sammy's.

Saturday morning Charles passed by for a little chat, - on his way to New Orleans. Caroline Dormon spent part of the morning with me, and we devoted ourselves to going over the gardens and examining a variety of things. I learned a lot from her, - little details about Louisiana soil and propagation of flowers, and especially finer points on transplanting oaks and magnolias. It was time well spent.

The afternoon was hot, but in spite of that, I undertook an exploration trip into the attic of this house when Little King passed by to see me. Together we ransacked the place and he helped a hand me down six parts of a substantial ante bellum four poster, - the four posts and the two side boards. I know not if I shall find the end boards, the head board and the tester, but there is hope. It is much after the style of the one I am now using, and like it, this one, newly brought to light, is hand made and altogether suitable, if it can be fitted up, for a place at Arenbourg. We shall see, and I shall speak of it further.

1386

Our labors were interrupted by the arrival of Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Pattison, who brought six people, - pilgrims, - with them, and as they remained until supper time, the social department took over the balance of the day which otherwise would have been devoted to treasure hunting. The Madam was enchanted that I had found the four poster and says she thinks I should have one of the two fine single spool beds which is now in the house I first occupied when I arrived at "elrose. That has the advantage of having the springs and mattress, and I think we shall find a place for it. Both she and Dan continue to speak with enthusiasm of the Arenbourg project, and so at the moment things look rather rosey, so far as moral support from this quarter goes. May it continue.

On the physical side, I think my cold is on the way out, - I hope, - and the seeming improvement of my patient since yesterday has had a pleasant effect on things in general. She came down stairs today for dinner, and might take a ride with Dan later today, - which would really be remarkable, - down stairs twice in the same 23 yours, what with the change of the clocks, - or would it be 25 hours?

interruption:

I take up my pen again some 14 hours later. At 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, and in spite of a drizzle, Dan Henry took the Madam and me for a nice ride. The Madam wanted to pass by Arenbourg, and we did, - viewing it from the highway, of course.

Dan wants to walk around the place with me and so view it in its present stage, so that he may recall it in that way, following the new arrangements that will be made when cotton time is over.

The enclosure from Dora I send along, having forgotten what points it does cover, but I shall try to recall before writing him this morning.

Saturday's mail also brought a "Khotsch-bosse" diatribe from Lady Lake touching upon everything in the world, including an enthusiastic expression relative to Clemence's Show, so I guess we may be able to put that thing over alright. I shall send her letter to Mr. Pipes, asking him to reutn it to me eventually, with a view to passing it along, - not so much for what it contains as for the indication of what "oalde" Texas is like when it gets started.

It seems to me there was another point I wanted to make, but it eludes me and so I shall fold for the moment.....

1387

1387

October 2nd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Your two letters of Thursday and Friday to hand in Monday's mail.

By coincidence, - as was your hope, - the air mail was read first, assuring me that the mails from this place were functioning, - even though a bit lagged, and that I might therefore disregard the uncertainties as expressed in your Thursday letter. Just as we finished reading the air mail letter, my assistant was called away on some plantation business, so that, as I write this note, the Thursday letter, which the Friday one was designed to cancel, has not been read. Therefore, as you see, your air mail was even more effective than you had even supposed.

Since my reference in yesterday's letter to the radio, I must remark that I have heard a couple of programs which I found quite interesting. If you heard Max present Bette Davis on Monday night in a play that sounded as though its title might be something like "Mr. Skippington", but obviously not precisely that, you are quite as enthused as I am at the fine quality of the play. We all know so many bags who are forever in a stew about their inability to maintain a girl's beauty for 75 years that a play centering around that type of stupid vanity and accompanying selfishness must express a situation which confronts everyone too often in the ranks of those who are too petty to understand the meaning of the word grandeur, - who are unmindful, and intellectually incapable of comprehending that not physical prettiness but grandeur of soul and person waxes more magnificent as the years run along.

Another program I heard which interested me very much was a 15 minute address by some Rabbi, speaking on the question of a Jewish homeland. I am sorry I did not catch the man's name, especially as his point was quite the contrary of the position in favor of the homeland, as expressed recently by Senator Wagner and others. This rabbi had this to say: - It would not only be unfair, - but unthinkable, - if someone should arise and begin beating the drum on behalf of the Baptists, for example, urging that somewhere in the world the people now occupying a particular locality be moved out and the place set aside and a political unit established, - making the region a Baptist Homeland.

.....(over).....

1388

According to the rabbi, the Baptists, Catholics, Presbyterians, Lutherans, etc., etc., in this country are first of all Americans and secondly they are of one faith or another. He accordingly pointed out that good Jews living in the United States are first of all Americans, and secondly they are of the Jewish faith, and that if the laws of any and all countries are fairly administered, there is no more need of establishing a Homeland for Jews than there is for Episcopalians, etc.

This may have been aired many a time in the press which I have not seen, but the position, - especially for a Jew to take, was new to me, and I liked it quite a lot.

But now I see Strange as it may seem, even to this day there are people who still would round up all the negroes and ship them back to a Homeland in Africa, which is certainly just as silly as rounding up all the Jews and shipping them off to Palestine. Strange, how slowly the people do get civilized. In the case of the rabbi, he mentioned that in 1791, - Sept. 28th, if I remember correctly, France, then in revolution, passed the first laws creating, - or recognizing that the Jew was first of all the national of the country where he lived and that his faith was a matter of his personal conscience and had nothing to do with his political standing. I understood the speaker to say that this was the first liberalizing law in regard to lifting Jewish bans in France. And that set me to thinking how much I didn't know about Jews under the Bourbons. There was old Samuel Bernard, the financier during Louis XIV's War of the Spanish Succession, and I was under the impression that perhaps his daughter married Colbert's son, thus easing a mixed strain into high places, but I am not sure of that point, and I am totally ignorant as to many restraining laws at the time.

Mr. Brew has just skipped over from the gin, and read me
your nice letter, mentioned above as unread. I am so glad you
do not miss Bette Davis in favor of The Song of Norway. I know it must
have been lovely, and I think it so grand of you to take the
girl friend along with you. The article, "Cane River," has
subsequently been acknowledged along with the elegant package for
"les Fugueous", etc. And thanks again a million. I so much
enjoyed the clippings, and shall write Dame Elanor today in
regard to our little educational problems. Time is running
a bit short and I shall have to let this slide. Thanks again for so
many nice letters, but please, please, please do not try to
write at the expense of a few moments rest for your own precious
self. Do tell all about the news from afar as referred to in
the 8 page letter you mentioned.....

0221

October 3rd, 1945.

October 3rd, 1940.

I had a letter yesterday from the Department of Public Welfare at Baton Rouge, relative to my Reading Machine. They claim they received the machine this morn August 28th, which most certainly is an error, since Miss Ramsey was not here and delivered the machine to Baton Rouge last she was here and delivered the machine was for me. Well, anyway, it was subsequently returned to me for to read it and was subsequently returned to them, but on re-check "Mama love Chicken Lulu." I have accordingly returned it to New York. And I ask: "What you say, Aurellia?" the machine will be returned or will be delivered right for me. And Aurellia say: - and a new machine leased. I have a radio-ones order. I said: "Mama, her, she jus' love Chicken Lulu!"

And I wrack my brain and at long last I figure it out. What Aurellia is talking about is Campbell's Shicken Noodle soup. Well, that's that. And of not the slightest interest, have that it illustrates how poorly we enunciate or how in- differently Aurellia catches what we say. And if I had never seen or heard tell of "noodles", I reckon I would get no closer than Aurellia.

In yesterday's post came your perfect letter, address
to Dear Aunt Camie and Francois. It could not have been
better phrased and arranged, and pleased the Madam to a "T".

The copies of the Times Magazine Section arrived at the same time, and I am hoping I may enlist some reading privilege of one or two of the articles you mentioned as being of especial interest, although it is difficult to get much reading here, as I have no more.

There was a letter in the same post from Stephen. He is at present at White Sulphur Springs, ulcers of the stomach and his present problem, rather than Army discharges, I believe. It is interesting to note how many people solicit his services in discharge matters. People who know him are not at all, but who appeal to him through some member of the family here at Melrose. Yesterday, for example, a Natchitoches banker made a second appeal in behalf of his son, - papa having lost the first letter J. H. wrote to Stephen relative to the case. In yesterday's mail, too, came a letter from Sam Jones, written to J. H. in deference to some unknown person who had appealed to Herr Jones. And so, measured by the situation away off down here, one can imagine about how many communications from private citizens Stephen gets, addressed to him directly in Washington.

1390

I had a letter yesterday from the Department of Public Welfare of Baton Rouge, relative to my Reading Machine. They claim they received the machine from me on August 22nd, which most certainly is an error, since Miss Ramsey was not here so late as that. I think it was July that she was here and delivered the machine to Baton Rouge for me. Well, anyway, the Office says that the machine was sent to New York for repair and was subsequently returned to them, but on re-checking, they found it still in imperfect condition. They have accordingly returned it to New York, where, after a second try by that organization, the machine will either be returned or will be declared unfit for use, and a new machine issued, - if and when one becomes available. Thank Heavens I have a radio once more. Otherwise I would miss the machine doubly. And so from here out, I shall have to depend upon passing pilgrims for my "literary evenings".

And speaking of "literary evenings", what in the world do you hear of Plumette's doings, and will her brother and his family remain here? And what in the world do you imagine ever happened to the Wedes. My curiosity on the latter point isn't great, since the thickness of the skull, both of wife and husband, certainly made them rather dull objects.

Swinging back to the aftermath of local doings, I must mention a minor mystery that puzzles Peter and me. He came by last night to tell me "how I've doin'", and that he was going to the doctor no more. I applied a bit of healing ointment to his wounded member and together we examined the bloody trousers he had been wearing the night of the shooting. Readily we discovered the hole in the front of the new pants where the bullet had entered, but search as we might, we never could find where it had left the garment from the back. I certainly hope the thing isn't lodged in him, even as was my tick in me for a while. The only explanation I can think of is that the bullet may have gone out the bottom of the pant leg, but that seems so unlikely that it is merely a poor explanation to account for absence of evidence of its departure, - all other evidence lacking. And, speaking of niggers, there is one from further up the Cote d'Or who is currently at Melrose for

1391

cotton picking. His last name is Youmans, - and no kin to Vincent, I presume. Some white person, probably, pinned a strangely combined first name on him at birth. What with the Irish being so proud as they are of an "O" as a prefix, - O'Day, O'Donald, O'Reilly, etc., - just as the French like their "de"s and the Germans their "von"s, so we have in the Youmans' youth this little mixture of old Ireland and Palestine combined, - his first name being, of all things, - O'Levy!

Somehow or other I was too busy yesterday to explore my attic further, but what with a nice cool day in prospect at this writing, I shall attempt to find the foot and head-boards for the old four poster, mentioned in an earlier letter.

On closer examination of the original pieces thus far discovered, I am convinced they are cherry, and this delights me, - for cherry is so definitely very early American, or French or Spanish in the Great South West.

Various opinions have been expressed by various people as to the identity of the wood, but I am sure that it is cherry, after careful examination, and by confirmation by Sam Peace, who knows something about wood.

The idea that it might be cedar, - because of its color, - as expressed by Fugabou, is out, because this is obviously of early slave creation and cedar was seldom used in ante bellum times and never in provincial times. Cedar is not indigenous to Mississippi and Louisiana, and every tree that grows here was either brought in or has sprung from such transplanted items. It was planted rather frequently in the 1840's, - for there was some sentimental business about it that was never clear to me. For myself I would never give one garden space, for pine trees are out of place in river bottoms and cedars, - in the South at least, are a very trashy tree, forever breaking off in small branches and cluttering things up. Then, too, they are forever harboring funny kinds of insects which make podge-podge webs and whatnot that are both unsightly and in no way harmonious with the more vigorous and sleek or purely decorative trees in this locality.

I have seen quite a few pieces of furniture in Natchez that we know came down from the time of the Spanish Governors. Old John Bisland, who was in Natchez in the 1770's, left several beds and armchairs and chest of drawers, which I shall point out to you eventually at Mary Lambdin and at the homes of some of the Hendersons, who

1392

are descendants. Almost invariably the oldest pieces on the wall are of cherry or cypress. Mary Lambdin at Edgewood and Miss Mistletoe, has lovely examples, and especially an old chest of drawers which she had converted into a desk, the writing section of which she had decorated with an inlay of holly wood, - the latter being very light in color. It was the one piece of furniture Henry Ford went crazy about when he was in Natchez. Needless to day, he did not get it.

As near as I can make out, cherry, - and I suppose it was a wild cherry, flourished mightily in these parts before the advent of the white and the black men, - which makes me wonder why we always, - up to now, have used the phrase, "before the advent of the white man", and left out the man of color completely. - Well, be that as it may, once in a while one runs across an old, old cherry tree that some miracle has escaped the axe, and invariably it is titanic. Up until 10 or 15 years ago, there was one still growing on the line between the big house at Melrose and J. H.'s. After it had been cut, it took nearly the whole plantation to get out the stump. It is said that after much diggin and cutting of roots, a couple of tractors were brought in and log chains attached, but to no avail at all. I have forgotten how the thing was finally eliminated, by dynamite, possibly.

Well, the up-shot of all this is that I must eventually get on my charger and scour the back country for a cherry tree and round out the missing pieces of the bed. Or better still, I shall contact some of my friends living in those remote sections, and they will surely know about the location of some remaining old giant of the region. I must gallop, as you must, too, in all probability, but I shall be on this board again shortly.....

1961

October ~~8~~th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service: to send [unclear] [unclear]

There is nothing particularly startling on the local news front.

In yesterday's post came a letter from Dora, which you have no doubt already found herewith. I think most of the reference are pretty clear, save possibly the identity of "Eugene" and "Earnest". Earnest is the present overseer, who after ten or fifteen years is being replaced by Eugene, the former clerk of Melrose, recently returned from the wars. Earnest is a heavy drinker, and at such times is very disagreeable to the darkies. When pressed for money, he appropriates cash from the store cash register when the regular clerk, - Bill Hinton, is absent, etc., etc. The astonishing thing is that Earnest should have remained here so long. I asked Sam Peace this morning if Mr. Eugene would be better than Mr. Earnest. "He couldn't do no worse," was Sam's response.

On the unpleasant ~~xx~~ side, I shall also enumerate this story. Pury was taken suddenly ill with pneumonia last Friday. The usual doctor was summoned, and immediately administered sulphur drugs, - the doses continuing over a period of several days. Once the physician visited his patient, - when originally summoned, - and that was all. I guess, on second thought, that is just as well.

As in understand it, there are two important points in regard to taking the cure all sulphur treatment, - a careful check on the urine, - and I need not recall to mind how what was supposed to be mine, when I was supposed to be taking sulphur last Winter. The other point is that soda, in some form or other, must be administered along with the sulphur to keep the body alkalinized.

Day before yesterday, while at the store, Puny came creeping in. I inquired as to his health, and for no reason on earth, save for conversation, asked him if he was taking loose soda or soda in pill form, along with his sulphur pills, - which did the doctor give him. Puny said he was just taking the sulphur pills, that the doctor had left nothing else and hadn't told him to take anything else.

Smart me, of course, had to get my finger into the pie right there. Accordingly I walked back with him to his cabin and asked Zelma, his wife, about the soda business. She had heard nothing of it, although she had been present when the doctor called.

1394

I thereupon took over and gave a large dose of soda forthwith, and recommended that additional doses be taken with each of the remaining doses of sulphur that still remained.

While I know not for certain if soda is imperative at such times, I believe that it is, and if so, I think this is just another case of the criminal negligence that can be chalked up against our vanishing physician.

Yesterday I dropped by Puny's to see how he was doing. He was in a much gayer frame of mind and obviously the sulphur had corrected the pneumonia business. But possibly Puny's psychological operations were working toward his improvement, too, for he told me that since taking the several large doses of soda, he felt like he was perking up, and so, whatever be the cause, I am glad that he is on the mend and that we are shortly going to be rid of our present so-called physician. It is bad enough that they treat the Madam so haphazardly, - they never did take specimens of her urine during her long seige with sulphur, but I think it even worse for them to treat the negroes so casually in matters of health. After all, the Madam does have occasional contact with people who have some sort of vague understanding of the latest wrinkles in medecine, but these poor darkies, putting their faith exclusively in the hands of the doctor, have no one to catch the slips that are made by one who certainly knows better and ought to be a little more human.

Alright, that's the end of that tirade. In yesterday's post, addressed to the Madam, was a letter from your friend, Barnett Kane. Of course he wanted something. He has seldom written if he didn't. The sum and substance of his letter was to announce that he is scheduled, tentatively, to speak in Hatchitoches on November 19th. That means he expects to be hidden to Melrose at that time. I would add that he added no post script, sending love to the Madam's confidential confidant. "In fact," as she would express it, "he didn't even tell me to go to Hell".

Now, so far as I know, the Madam is not writing letters these days, and hasn't in ever so long. I suppose, in the event she feels a letter is called for in response to yesterday's, will be through my efforts. And I hope that is the way it works out, for I shall forget not only a post script but the body of the letter, the envelope and all.

I think Plantation Parade is scheduled to appear on November 7th. Kane says those who have seen the proofs are crazy about the book. Something tells me the Madam isn't going to be too crazy about it, but perhaps she will be, - one never knows. But there will be some stage setting done before it appears, and frankly, it will have to be fine or it will never dominate the setting that will be prepared for it. Did you say I'm a bag?

1395

Quite unexpectedly, visitor have come and gone, as between this page and the foregoing. It was 6:30 by my time piece when a gentle tap came on my door and Lo! there was Mary Frances and Brother (of the "aris green"). It seems that Brother, aged 6, wants to keep my shoes shined for me when he starts going to school later in the month, and he thought he would like to get a running start on the shoes by taking them over now. His papa, - King Hunter, had picked up a pair last week end, but that was after the gin had closed, and Brother didn't get a chance to come with him. And so Brother has made his initial visit, and has gone. Thus a little helper for Arenbourg is being initiated, and I am hoping he may not be disappointed in his hopes as to inaugurating service with white folks, and that we at Arenbourg, in the future, may not be disappointed in the assistance he lends or contributes for everybody's welfare.

Without ever thinking much about it, I will remark off hand that this long term association with prospective helpers in anticipation of eventual tenure of service, is really one of the delights of living in this remote region. When I think of how in more populous localities one contacts a human being through a Want Ad or an Employment Bureau, hires the person and hopes the Lord they won't be "too triflin'", - and how in this neighborhood one "grows up" with future helpers, learns to recognize their strength and weakness, and to be tolerant of their short-comings, while at the same time, learning to love them because the contact over a period of years makes knowing them possible, - all these aspects culminate, I suppose, in giving an aroma and a flavor to a way of life that is quite impracticable and impossible elsewhere. Of course I am not at all sure that the net results, so far as service goes, is any better or perhaps so good, as are the results of picking an educated and efficient servant from out of the dark, as one must in centers of concentrated populations, but regardless of the results in the labor picture, there is a delicious mellowness in being a little closer to human beings, even though less endowed with what we like to think is important, and in the end, it is only the human side that counts, I guess, and I suppose that it why it is nice to look forward to a time when Arenbourg functions as a human habitation and circumstances afford us the time to life a little nearer to God through the medium of those created in His own image.....

VEEL

October 5th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service; same as above.

I just noticed that I have been mis-dating my recent letters, having failed to turn my calendar to October. Today is Friday, and I think October 5th is correct as a date.

After a couple of cool days, yesterday turned off warm and humid. I managed to get off a few licks of work in spite of visitors, both in the morning and afternoon.

Dr. and Mrs. Knipmeyer stopped by in the morning for an hour, bet

the usual morning session of the Melrose Clinic at St. Mathew's and the accustomed dinner at Magnolia with Miss Sally. Dr. Knipmayer was in ex-

...ellent form, with a slight humor running through everything he said, over a tragic and dismal picture of the seamy side of civilization as

is manifest in certain localities of Natchitoches Parish where he is the Parish physician.

Tobacco Road somehow seems mild when one hears of the situation of

the white trash living within the Parish limits. He spoke of one Crystine Gillespie. As a young girl, living with her parents in a

corn crib some four or five miles South of Natchitoches, she was a victim of the hook worm. As Parish doctor, he called by to attend to

the grill. But he had to wait by the corner of the corn crib until Chrystine's parents had beaten her soundly to force her to permit

the doctor to give her a treatment. In her early teens, she married a "widow-man" with several children. By her marriage to him, that union

begot three or four offspring. They subsequently divorced and she married another. They begot some more. Then she married a man, at present a

soldier in the Pacific. Without the formality of a divorce, she "married" another man with whom she is now living, devoting much less time to

domestic chores than to "beautifying" her nails and lips with scarlet tints.

They live at present in Roehline some miles to the West of town

One of the children developed infantile paralysis. They tried quarantining. The following day the merchants complained that the lady and

ing. The following day, the merchants complained that the lady and children were browsing about in their stores. Arrangements were made to have the boxer visit the home to take whatever food stuffs were

needed. That was on Friday, and by Saturday night it was evident that the Parish Health and Aid officials had neglected to send any other

of the lady in question, for by mid-night of Saturday she was drunk in

one of the dry ton's wet cares. It is all very difficult, and she may be looking back upon it years as the last season.

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and even keeping the several children's parentage straight, - and that includes a couple of grandchildren, the lady in the case bunches them into groups to make their relationship more clear, referring to them as "his children", "my children", "our children" and "Their children". If that isn't a mess, then I give up.

The simple matter of getting head lice out of the hair of some children who spread that pest to other children in the school at Spanish Lake, some 5 miles in the same direction - hill country, from Natchitoches, is equally difficult. It seems in that region the girls must wear long hair, according to a strong parental opinion. The homes are lousy and repeated attempts at de-lousing gets nowhere. To make the job a little easier, Dr. Knipmayer suggested that the children bob their locks, but that ran into adamant opposition, - and lice remain.

Somehow the negro underprivileged seem to be less difficult, although probably the cases of need are as great numerically. He spoke of Sam Peace's niece who lives between "elrose and the spillway. She is dying of the more vicious of the social diseases. She is now very weak, and Dr. Knipmayer said when he visited her last Thursday, he found her in the bed. She asked him to be careful not to step on her shoes which were beside the bed. A day or two before, someone had brought her some eggs, and being tired, she hadn't gotten up to take them to the kitchen, but had put them in her shoes.

The lady's day is Evalina Easily. I think I may have named her before. Few people here however know her by that name, as everyone calls her Toots. One must admit that such a first name goes curiously enough with a last name such as the lady possesses.

In the matter of the social diseases, it is most heartening to contemplate the general improvement in the health situation in these parts and to envision the possibilities of steady improvement. They tell me, - the darkies, - that in the old days, it was the custom to send a truck to town every so often, and that it was always filled with colored folks, going to town for treatment, - a long and not too satisfactory process. Lots of people needing attention, and so tired to "quacks". Thanks, now, the new drugs, which entirely cure almost every patient, except "Toots", who let her condition drag too long, - there is practically no social disease problem left. It is my understanding that one to two days now sees a complete cure, with the patient usually having to visit the physician but a single time for one or the other of the two types of medicines that turn the trick. I predict a great advancement, not only in health, but also economically, for many of the people in the depressed rural areas, now by this miracle of science, that they are freed from not only the disease but also from the former practice of too many physicians who bled their helpless victims unmercifully over a period of years, - physically as well as financially.

And so, with eggs in her shoes, "Toots" Easily is going to die, and may she be remembered longer than she would have otherwise, by the fact that she may be looked back upon in years to come as the last person in this region to die of a malady whose devastation has been eliminated by the advances of contemporary science.

1398

Well, I most certainly got off the track, so far as general letter writing goes and perhaps a little bogged down in the field of medical surveys.

There is one side light I must touch upon, however, - and even though it seems pretty far fetched. In view of all the enlightenment of free education and general assistance to the underprivileged, plus the generations going before the present life of people in America, it does seem strange to me that we still have so many stupid people and such an engulfing back-wash of ignorance. And with such things in mind, I cannot help but feel that it is pretty much impossible to accept all the glowing accounts of the situation of the general population in Russia which has had but 25 years of its present regime. Either Americans are made of quite different and more stupid stuff than the Russians, or else there has been a heap of propaganda from the Steppes which by no means gives us a very clear picture of actualities in that place. I suppose one of the elements of strength in a democracy is the fact that we can dare, - can afford, - to drag out of the dark those lamentable situations and hold them up to the light for consideration, - with a hope of making some improvement.

Surely the United States cannot be the only land that has too many Tobacco Roads. I feel certain that Russia, for example, must have fully as many, - if, indeed, not a thousand times more. But one never hears of Russian Tobacco Roads, and I doubt if the powers in the Kremlin would have the courage to advertise them.

And that fear on the part of "the Bear that walks like a Man" is one of the principle reasons why I have never been much possessed by the terror that seems to haunt some people whenever the word Russia is mentioned. As it appears to me, that country is proceeding with great efficiency under a thorough-going autocracy, and in the long run, - while it is more efficient, it is at the same time but sporadically powerful. The kernel of strength in any nation, I think, is its ability to transmit power from one succeeding group to another, - generation after generation. That is where the strength of Democracy lies, for while it is never so strong or so efficient as an Autocracy, by the same token, it is never so weak and so subject to disaster. Catherine, Peter and Staline have been great successes because of their ability to weld a hundred million people into an unflinching goose-step. In the life of the nation, their success has been enormous, but momentary. The status of the nation has so much depended upon the personality of the individuality of its autocrat that once Time has removed the governmental main-spring, the whole outfit lurches, falters and sinks back into uncertainty and comparative impotence, - while "democracy, on the other hand, always creaking at the joints, keeps right on "muddling along" regardless of the character of the key-stone and the complexion of its king-pin.

1399

1399

What in the world do you reckon can be the matter with me this morning, what with all the evident tangents I am following, one paragraph after another.

Well, to return to the local scene. In the afternoon, Dan Henry went to Alexandria with Payne Henry, - departing before dinner. I accordingly dined with the Madam in her room. She continues to seem rather better and stronger, but I shall have to withhold an opinion as to what grade she is going to take for a little while. She has little or no attention from her usual medical advisers, and I think she has fore-gone coding these past few days, and I attribute much of her improvement to that. May that course continue.

There was another point I was going to make, but I shall have to skip it for the moment, both because I have forgotten what it was and because time is running short.....

What a pity the Schliemann program turned out so hopelessly divided. How many times have we all awaited the advent of something quite special, only to have something occur that forced us to stick one ear in one direction and the other in the opposite, hearing only enough of either to annoy us for our inability to absorb the one or the other with any satisfaction. I have been wondering if these sessions are taken down and made available in print, as some broadcasts are. If such were the case, and they could be printed in a size approximating that of the average book, wouldn't it enhance greatly the value of any volume, if a transcript of these discussions, covering one item or another, could be pasted in one's own volume.

While I think of it, I want to swing back to the subject of health, as touched upon in yesterday's memorandum. What I want to remark is a curious law in Louisiana requiring a prospective groom to secure a clean bill of health when he secures his license marriage. Theoretically, such a law is good, but at the same time there is an hilarious element about it, since there is no statute on the books requiring the lady, - the prospective bride, to present any statement as to her health at all. Now I assume that the original reason for stirring up such a business was to protect prospective children from possible inherent illnesses, contracted from the parents, and yet it does seem to me that a child might be as likely to contract an inheritable disease from its mother as readily as from its father.

1400

1400

October 6th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Thanks much for a splendid report, telling of your impending evening in the theatre. I feel certain that it afforded you a lot of pleasure. - The Song of Norway, - and I know it was good to share it with such a perfect companion.

What a pity the Schliemann program turned out so hopelessly divided. How many times have we all awaited the advent of something quite special, only to have something occur that forced us to stick one ear in one direction and the other in the opposite, hearing only enough of either to annoy us for our inability to absorb the one or the other with any satisfaction. I have been wondering if these sessions are taken down and made available in print, as some broadcasts are. If such were the case, and they could be printed in a size approximating that of the average book, wouldn't it enhance greatly the value of any volume, if a transcript of these discussions, covering one item or another, could be pasted in one's own volume.

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And then there is another practical aspect, resulting from such a law. Should a man and a maid feel the urge to live together as man and wife, - and should they desire to beget children, it is very simple for them to make use of the Common Law, - a recognized status, and so form a union without the restraints of the formal legal ceremony. Result:- plenty of illegitimate children.

1401

Just as I turned this page, I was enchanted to see something about the height of a man, and as white as a ghost, salking across the hite Garden, which I view from my desk. In reality, it was neither man nor ghost but a big old crane. One sees plenty of them back in the pecane groves and along the River, but seldom do they pay us a visit here in the gardens. I think we ought to eventually have one, - a tame old Grandpa one, at Arenbough, don't you?

You will be glad to know that the health of my patient continues rather on the bright side. She comes down for dinner and supper, and appears to be none the worse for doing so. Her favorite physician, - and wife, - came by yesterday. A blood count was made and she was told that her blood pressure has increased alarmingly, - up to 190, - or some such figure. I spoke with J. H. for a few moments later, - following their visit. We pondered on why they had to report the blood count increase to their patient, and concluded there was nothing any one could do with that pair.

A note from Waverly Plantation at Bains, Louisiana, indicates that Mrs. Lester's arm, recently broken, is now mended, and that she has accompanied her husband to Mayo's. He has been going to New Orleans weekly. I think I may have mentioned, to have treatments for the cancer on his face. He is such a fine person and such an ornament to the historically minded Societies in this region that his absence from accustomed activities will be generally lamented.

I am told the September Reader's Digest, appearing about the 28th of August, had several articles in it which were quite good. On leaving the Madam last night, she was about to read the one entitled "Silver Bill", which seems to be about Bill Spratling, who used to come here in the old days, and who occasionally still calls on Miss Alberta, as he passes through New Orleans between New York and Mexico, where he lives. Slick, affable and selfish are the adjectives I hear applied to him more than any others in these parts, - although one must not swallow adjectives with one gulp in these parts.

That big old crane I was talking about has just now taken off, disappearing beyond the tops of the bamboo hedge and the pecanes beyond. I notice that some of the butterfly lily stalks where he was foraging about were well over his head, some of them being at least 8 or 9 feet high.

Saturday again and tonight will be Saturday night, and I can only wonder what events impend at Sammy's.....

1402

October 7th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The Opportunity Shop (!) - and what an opportunity, - arrived in good order in yesterday's post.

I have unpacked the same, apportioning the several items in neat piles, and shall dish out coverings, warmth and good will in your name shortly. I have in mind several different souls who will be made glad with different items from this splendid assortment, but for no reason at all, save a kind of hunch, I have delayed making up my mind as to which will go what, feeling that within the next two or three days a series of perfect recipients will just naturally come to the surface.

It is certainly a fine collection and especially the underthings and the sweater and the trousers will come in good stead, now that the air is cooling off, while the union suits are just the checker for anyone of a half hundred of our friends, all of whom treasure them so much when the cooler days begin. As for the shirts, they are going to be a God send to some unsuspecting souls, - particularly as shirts of any kind are almost to obtain in this area at the present time.

On their behalf, - and on my own, you are twice blessed, and I shall speak of a thrice blessing within the next few days.

St. Augustin's Fair was held last night. It will continue today and tonight. It was dark on Saturday night when I had quite the Big House, after spending a very pleasant hour or two with Dan Henry and the Madam, actively engaged in settling the fate of the world. Outside it was dark, - a moonless night, but myriads of stars. I had thought of going to the Fair, but so ehov felt more negro inclined than mulatto, and so I headed out in the opposite direction, going down to the spillway and on to Clemence's.

Lyle had had an old phonograph kicking around here for years, and a month or so ago, I gave it to Clemence. Through the dark, as I crossed the spillway, I could hear its raucous notes jangling out on the moist, dark air. I could hear Mary Frances, Minnie-Mae and Junior frolicking up and down on the gallery, and I could see a silhouette of Clemence sitting there, in the half light cast by an oil lamp from within where Jackie was playing the old contraption for all it was worth. King Hunter was sitting on the steps, smoking a cigarette while Yank was half asleep on the gallery floor, off in the dark. It was all a lot nicer than the glare of the electricity at the Fair.

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1403

We all chatted for a while, and after an hour, King started for home, and Jackie, his sister, accompanied him, and the children tagged along, while Yank continued to snooze, and Clemence and I talked and laughed.

King's boy, Brother (of the Parish green) had dashed over for a few moments just before his papa had started home. Brother wanted to tell me that my shoes were all nice and shinny and that he was going to bring them to me in a day or two. I was glad, and fishing around in the top of my boots, Lo! as Mme. Beaumont would say, - I found a few pieces of lemon drops, which delighted Brother and the rest of the children and off they scampered into the dark.

Clemence had much to say about Brother and how he is looking forward to going to school about the end of the month, - his school being an hour spent with me each morning, when I shall attempt to teach him and Aurellia their A.B.C.'s. Two days later, when I

Clemence says that Brother was just a sight when he reached home with my shoes the other day. It seems his half sister, or rather his step sister, Estelle, who is a couple of years older, had in mind to help him shine them, but Brother put his foot down slap off, saying that no one could touch my shoes but himself, that anyone else might tear off the sole or something, and that I had let him have to shoes to shine for me and that nobody by him was going to touch them. It looks from that as though Brother, at 6, had taken me over completely.

Clemence spoke once or twice of her late husband, Manuel. She has been saving money to buy a gravestone for him. She tells me she was able to get one for either 5 or 7 dollars, which seems might inexpensive, but she declares she has saved up all the money required and that it is going to be put up as soon as cotton time is over.

But for the most part we talked on lighter subjects and we laughed much, but I must say that even in speaking of the departed, I must say none of the darkies in this neighborhood ever seem greatly depressed about the fact that their loved ones are gone. Somehow one gains the impression that they meekly accept the will of God or even better that they have a feeling of security that those who die go on to a better world, so that all references to them is always calm and never in any sort of a depressed way.

Back at Melrose, the night was yet young, so far as the Fair went, and although one of my mulatto friends stopped his car and asked me to ride over, I declined and folded up to listen to Report to the Nation and Assistant Secretary Dullus(?) speak instead.

I had seen Peter earlier in the evening. He said he was doing alright. Sometimes this trouser rubbed against his healing wound, but at such times, as he explained, "I jus walk away from it, meaning, I assume, that he somehow contrives to bend his body in such a manner as to keep the trouser and the wound from contacting each other.

1404

The Henrys came in, - Dan and Paynie, - a short time before Invitation to Learning was scheduled to begin. Accordingly I heard only the last 7 minutes of it, but that sounded as though it might have been quite good.

Immediately afterward, I wrote Invitation to Learning, asking if a transcript in type or in print is made of these programs, and if not why not, and how about supplying them, or making them available for subscriptions, both to private individuals and to institutions. I hazarded the guess that many a listener would like to have a transcript and that it would be nice if they were printed about the size of the average book so that they could be attached to a relative or related volume. We shall see what we shall see.

I never did much like Bennet Cerf, and I don't know why, except that my feelings were confirmed when he took an uncalled for crack at Alexander Woolcott, shortly after the latter's death. I have no doubt that all Mr. Cerf said about him at the time was true, but it seemed to me to be uncalled for.

I noticed that Mr. Cerf did refer to several young men whose manuscripts, following this war, would reflect a certain freedom from former literary restraints, and I think he mentioned Bernard Fast, as one. I assume, perhaps, that Mr. Cerf's company is going to publish Mr. Fast's next opus.

I don't know anything about Mr. Fast, although I have read two of his books, - one on George Washington, which I liked very much, but the name of which I cannot recall. I also read his life of Tom Paine, which I thought was very well done indeed, but I think I have mentioned all this before to you.

And did I tell you about the letter from Charles Mazurette, currently in New Orleans. (I discuss so many things with you mentally that I am sure I am forever dishing up the written things a dozen times over, - and can you forgive?) Well, regardless, there was a letter from Charles on Saturday, I think it was. He says the New Orleans book shops are filled with H. Lane's PLANTATION PARADE, which are available for inspection but not for sale until the end of the month. Says he further: - There is a 20 page chapter on Melrose, entitled: "Chatelaine in Shirtsleeves", - I nearly said Shirtsleeves, but it is Shirtwaist, - Chatelaine in Shirtwaist, - who, of course, is no other than the "adam, and he says the thing is quite well done.

Well, so be it, and just for fun, when the volume comes to hand, we shall see and pencil the stuff, - if any, - that was lifted from one source or another.

There was something else I wanted to mention but I am awaited at the big house for something or other, - perhaps pilgrims, and so I shall fold at this point.....

1405

October 8th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It's quite cool this morning, with a spanking breeze from the North bending the bamboo hedges and impelling Peter, who passed this way early, to build me a fire, primarily to warm himself, but ostensibly to provide me with an element to short-circuit the dropping temperature.

The enclosed cable speaks for itself. "Absent Treatment" is what studied neglect of correspondence is styled in these parts. Our little South American correspondent inquires if his August letter was received. August, September, October. Yes, it was received. I think my April cable to him was received, on his part, too. April, May, June, July, August. Alright. Sauce for the goose is sauce, - or applesauce, - for the gander. In this instance, "Absent Treatment" seems to have worked. I shall let it work a little further before I respond.

On the home front, Monday, October 7th, might be set down as the official date of 1945 for the opening of the pecane season. Prior to the actual gathering of the year's crop, there are always a number of half empty pecanes that fall from the trees, but these are always disregarded until the rains and the winds have started the sound furit to drop. It is then that the hogs go in for their autumn field day, busying themselves beneath the trees a full 24 hours stretch around the clock, - if permitted to do so.

At this time of the year, all the people on the place are advised to keep their hogs penned up if they do not want them shot. Some people do penm them up, - with honest desire to keep them at home, - even though the hogs of such people frequently do break out. Other people, - more sligh, - keep them penned up during the day, and then when night comes on they let them out, so that they will fatten on pecanes all during the night, - and then they re-pen them in the first hours of a new day.

Yesterday afternoon, J. A. called for a shotgun, and banged away at three or four hogs, gorging themselves under the trees lining the road between the garage and the bridge. Everyone at such times disclaims onwership of the offending animals, but when night settles down, the owner usually claims his pork under cover of darkness. There is only one joker in J. A.'s onslaughts against the hogs. He manifests great rage at the depredations, but somehow always contrives to miss the hogs when he goes gunning for them. I think he believes his gestures at slaughter will impress the daikies. My guess is that they aren't impressed at all, but it does remind them that if J. A. hands the gun to

1406

the overseer, the shots will most certainly strike their marks, and so there is some resulting advantage in this yearly gesture.

It is a curious thing about a hog, which I didn't know about until I came to the country to live. A hog will feed madly on pecanes until he is "full-up". But after having reached that situation, the hog is just beginning his activities, for he will never retire from beneath the pecane trees when completely stuffed, but will keep right on searching out the pecanes, taking them in his mouth and crushing them, and spitting them out, - shell and meat as well. One would think that he would give thought to his next pang of hunger, leaving the food for an other go-round. But that thought never seems to enter his head. The darkies tell me that a hog will not take long, - and will not eat too many pecanes, if allowed to range at will, - but that he will destroy bushels of them, immediately upon having satisfied his hunger. It is a curious thing that the same situation obtains in regard to corn. A hog will go into a corn patch and cut down stalk after stalk, eating the ears until he is "plumb full". When he can eat no more, he will keep right on cutting the corn and mangling the ears, leaving them to rot on the ground. I must say it is no wonder that people owning pecane trees are adamant about keeping up hogs at this season of the year.

Early on Monday morning Paynie and Dan Henry left here for New Orleans, planning to stop off at Mansura, La., and Baton Rouge on the way. Paynie telephoned from Mansura in the afternoon, saying that somehow or other Dan Henry slipped on something in the street in that place, - there was a pouring rain, - and dislocated his left elbow. It seems Day, - still in the Army, had no right to be traveling in civilian clothes, and without his papers, - and therefore could not appeal to the Army for physical attention. They continued their trip, - but not in too much comfort, probably, - and will no doubt bring Pat back with them for a week end at Melrose, about Thursday.

I must tell you of 24 Mile Ferry. It is perhaps five miles down the river from Melrose, - on the other side of the river, - if a ferry, indeed, can be said to be on one side or the other of a river. In ante bellum days it was a very active point on the river, because of the number of travelers passing across the river at that point, and was called 24 mile ferry because it was 24 miles from Natchitoches. Like the rest of the property in this section, it was owned by mulattoes, who maintained the ferry service and kept a store and a gaming house. Among the other furnishings of the latter was a billiard table. I know not when the billiard table was introduced, but I assume it was of ante bellum origin, since horse racing on the 24 Mile Ferry track was flourishing in the 1840's, and all the travelers from Alexandria, New Orleans, Opelousus and the Texas country, passed this way and no doubt refreshed themselves at the mulatto, Dupre's, and amused themselves at his gaming house.

1407

Last Sunday Dan took his mother and me for a ride down the West bank of Cane River, crossing the Melrose bridge, and going by the Church, the site of J. B. Metoyer house, and so on by 24 miles ferry, - no longer used, say for the past quarter of a century, - and so on to Magnolia plantation, and thence back home. The old general store at the one time Ferry still stands, and on its gallery, one or two of its legs missing, rested the fine old billiard table, sadly battered and exposed to the weather.

It gave me an idea, and so in today's mail, I am writing to Miss Sally, whose Magnolia plantation adjoins the present Lakeside Plantation, which embraces 24 Mile Ferry, and I have asked Miss Sally to ask the present owner of the billiard table if I may have it.

It is most certainly a piece of furniture of dubious intrinsic value, and yet it occurs to me that with some fixing, it might make a wonderful library table, - for Arenbourg, of course, - for billard tables are usually so solid that as a library table, it ought to be so firm it would never wobble about, regardless of how much we might lean on it or pile it high with books.

If one or more of its decorative legs are missing, I would remove those that remain and put on plain but heavy supports in their places. Then, if a quick glance did not deceive me, I could make use of the couple of legs that remain, converting them into supports for a console table, for they are rather flat, and seem to be decorated with some kind of a scroll or acanthus leaves. The whole thing could be painted white, - these legs, I mean, - and touched up just a little with gold, and I believe they would make most attractive supports for a side table below a wall mirror, or some such.

I certainly have done a lot of talking about a most ephemeral item, but you will pardon my enthusiasm for this item, if obtained, would be another item, used to advantage at Arenbourg, which would embrace practicability and at the same time hold within itself another souvenir of the Cane River country that will be pleasant to include, where practicable, in our maisonnette, - yes, no?

Must gallop monstarily.....

1408

COPI

What with the enclosures, - the Lake letter might be returned, - and what with the further consideration that in view of the prolonged week-end, you are heading into, I think I would do well to keep this Memorandum, and succeeding ones for the balance of the week, to a minimum. For undoubtedly you will have plenty to confront you in other lines on your return, without the necessity of wading through endless correspondence.

But I do want to thank you for the grand letter to hand, advising me on so many points. May I congratulate you on your success in so quickly discovering the Perkins volume on the XIV Louis. I have never read that item, but should like to. You also mention the Valois item by St. Amand. That one I have never read either, - but should like to, - there are so many things to be done at Arenbourg eventually.

I think I may have mentioned in a former note that the St. Amand volume that I used to like best was "The Last Years of Louis XV", and yet for the life of me, as I now write, I can not recall why, unless I found in it a picture of that marvelous distilled brew which was the last of the 17th century and the first three-quarters of the 18th, which, in my estimation, represented in many respects, the high point in various walks of life. Perhaps, too, there was a certain sadness about it, too, something like the fading glow of a sunset, following a day of great brilliance, when one's eyes somehow cling longingly to the cloud-streaks in the sky, as rose fades into gray, and feathery sweeps of the Sirius decorative scheme gradually transforms itself into ash. I suppose it is the subconsciousness that soothing beautiful is dying that makes such a sunset and such a volume seem even more precious than it really is. Anyway, - I liked the Last Year of Louis XV.

It was good of you to share with me the accounts as revealed by the 8 page letter from afar. The picture isn't pretty, and one is so wise to eliminate it from memory, so far as possible. You will forgive me for again making reference to it, but frankly I am grateful to God that the Pilgrimage of Sorrow that you had to make alone in the years before the war, - if things had to turn that way, in reality transpired then. For now there is a peace that comes with such sorrow, and a feeling of gratitude to

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1409

God that one so beloved departed for a better land before all the tumult and destruction rode in on the winds to blight those remaining in the same neighborhood afterward. Whenever I visit old plantation graveyards, I am always finding myself rejoicing when finding the date of departure to read 1859 or 1860 or even 1861. I suppose my satisfaction comes from the assurance, given by such a date, that he who sleeps beneath the monument, was so fortunate as to have been welcomed into unending peace before the ravages of man's tempests broke about the this or that individual's earthly homeland. For your sake, and somehow for my own, since the happiness of one is so definitely hinged upon another's, do I rejoice that those once loved so dearly forever escaped the aftermath of horrors which now must x rest so heavily upon those who remain.

After posting my yesterday's memorandum, I learned further particulars regarding Dan Henry's accident. It seems that the dislocation of his elbow was the notice given the Madam, but actually, his arm was badly broken, and that instead of being able to go on to New Orleans, he was transported to Camp Livingston Hospital at Alexandria, and from there, on the following day, he was transported to Camp Polk Hospital, at Leesville, La., which is about 50 miles due West of Melrose. Apparently the break was quite bad, and obviously he will be in a cast for the balance of his furlough, - Nov. 14th.

I expect we shall have a fairly quiet week end in these parts, and I know of no particular group of pilgrims scheduled to pass by, although I have a feeling that Miss Culver may make a round for a couple of days, and I assume Pat may come up from Baton Rouge with Fayne on the latter's return from New Orleans. What with gas available, however, I have no doubt that there will be the usual number of road runners, but lots of times they have some little shutter opening on the outside world which is pleasant to peek through momentarily, and I always like to embrace such opportunities, - if the road runners are bent on just wasting time, in which case, that type invariably is so dull they wouldn't have any ideas on opening shutters.

You mentioned Nadine. Poor Nadine. Like you, the absence of word sounds ominous to me. And even though word did come through, - then what. She, - indeed any of God's children, - deserved something better, and yet in one direction at least, - meaning me, she even shut off the opportunity of an expression of sympathy, which was genuine. On the other hand, I know she had other people who admired her, and if she hasn't unwisely eliminated all contacts with sympathetic souls, she'll be able to make it, even though it be by but a second best route. I wanted to speak on a kindred point, but had better break off.....

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1411

October 11th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I take pen in hand before dawning, but even though the spread of time as between this moment and the advent of Herr Kelly, the post rider, I anticipate lots of people dropping in, and I shall probably get little done by way of correspondence.

It's a strange thing, but as soon as things cool off in the autumn, I get plenty of visitors early in the morning, - proffered services in making fires, etc. The fact is that for a variety of reasons, - some good and some not so good, many people have failed to lay in a supply of wood, and knowing I have a store on my front gallery, they like to make the most of its potential heat by coming by.

Billy Porter, and huge negro, came by about 4 to ask me to telephone for an ambulance for Elam's mama who has a severe case of appendicitis. Mitchell, the axe, arrived a little later with a tray of coffee. Then "little King blew in, asking if I had an old hat for him to wear to school today, - for it begins this October 11th. King Hunter was next on the docket, to refurbish the fire and to say he would pick up my shoes this evening and take them home with him for Brother to shine. It was too cold, he thought, for Brother to start school this morning, so I reckon my pupil will begin about tomorrow, - for Columbus day seems to be an unknown event in these parts.

Yesterday's post was thin, with but a single letter, coming from the General's wife to say that the latter is getting along alright and may avoid an operation, but remains in Walter Reid Hospital.

And speaking of the military, I have been greatly impressed by the unexpected publicity given the Marshall report, which, from news reviews, appears to be quite an interesting document. The line off' quoted from it, which I liked best, was something to the effect that American, unprepared, in giving little thought to the future, was carrying her Freedom in a paper bag. I think that is a good comparison.

I enclose an exceedingly rough transcript from the Chase Diary, - so often mentioned in the past. I have no doubt that you will find if of no especial interest, but I did think you might like to get the feel of his klotsch-bosse style. (over)

0111

1411

The Madam does not know that I have the Diary in duplicate. She read the thing, and proceeded to loose some of the pages of the duplicate. Before sending the original to be bound, I had Mr. Brew read me from the original, in order to fill out the missing pages for the duplicate, just to keep a record of the manuscript, although, when bound, we shall always have the original in the Arenbourg

collection. From the subject matter in this rough draft, you will notice that the pages that the Madam lost, - lo! - dealt with this particular region. Coincidence, - I assume, - although it may be more than that.

But that doesn't matter, the original sheets are intact and have gone off to the binder, and we shall always have it to work on, - when we get around to it, - as well as the duplicate, unbound, - so our supply is ample.

I merely put in an old faded carbon sheet as I jotted down the missing pages, thinking that by glancing through these, you would better form an idea for yourself as to the general flavor of the book and in thus reading it, you would applaud the old Chinese proverb that a single picture is better than 10,000 words of description.

The whole manuscript is much like these few pages, although there are sections that have long religious businesses in them. But you may readily understand how valuable the work is as a picture of the times in which he wrote when, - tell you that, the places mentioned in these paragraphs are places that one may visit today, and often one may recognize certain features that the Rev. mentions. Another point of interest, so far as evidence remains as to the correctness of his observations appear unexpectedly from time to time if one will but glance about. For example, the room in which I write has wooden bars at the window. Wooden bars were never put there to restrain anyone from breaking out, for they are bars that could be broken. According to oldsters in these parts, their grandparents were always complaining about the depredations of the "varments", of lions breaking into the house, etc., etc. So etimes in early documents one runs across accounts of "tigers", - sometimes written "tigres", abounding in these parts. In reality, these animals were panthers and mountain lions, and they were frequently bounding into unbarred windows. But I assume the bears were even more of a nuisance, for a bear is inclined to be rather peaceful and not especially desirous of attacking human beings, but they are extremely curious and always did love breaking into store houses and kitchens in search of food, - especially molasses or honey.

I believe Mr. Chase made this journey from Alexandria to Natchitoches and thence to Arkansas, in June of 1832. That was the year Red River swung from its Cane River bed to its present location further east by five miles. I assume that the Reverend made this journey on horseback, and I only regret he didn't mention Ile Brevelle as he passed this way. - You will of course dispose of the enclosed pages as you please, for I have no use for them. Merely thought you might gain some idea of the Chase business, even though the transcription is miserable. ...I must slip.

0111

1412

October 12th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

September 12th, - but four weeks back, he blew in quite unexpectedly. A telephone from New Orleans yesterday indicates that he will arrive today sometime.

Accordingly, if there should be a break in the usual filing of reports you will understand.

I shall most certainly be greatly inconvenienced by his coming, - I hope he will stay no longer than Monday, - but I can stand it alright, being advised in advance.

A second cable came to hand from Santiago yesterday. It seems the gentleman down yonder is conscious of not having had a prompt response to his last one. I responded to yesterday's, saying that as my beard grew longer with the years, I find myself gearing my responses to correspondence by the length of time it takes me to catch the echo. I sent the message by air mail, so I reckon within a week he will have my response.

The enclosed announcement comes from la Moore's daughter. I must eventually get a line of congratulation off to her. After all these years, she is at last possessed of a real flesh and blood grandchild. It is curious on what grounds we sometimes wish people well. In the present instance, for example, I discover, on examination, that while my good wishes are quite genuine both for the health of the baby and the joy of its parents, the primary motive for my good wishes stems from my desire that the advent of the child may somehow impell the grandmother to take up marriage, and so provide herself with a permanent roost and feeding ground. - preferably in Baton Rouge, where the Colonel has a domicile. I think I may have mentioned before that one of my favorite radio stations is WHO, Des Moines. Last night at 11:30, - I always awaken for a sort of news-editorial broadcast at that hour, I heard a most appropriate, and most

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enlightening dissertation, on that anniversary of Columbus Day Eve. One thing I learned that surprised me was that contrary to popular understanding, Columbus did not die in poverty and neglect, but on the contrary, was held in high esteem by the Court of Spain, who provided him with two couriers to carry messages back and forth from his residence to the Court, - one messenger being his son and the other a youth whose name I shall not attempt to spell correctly, - Americus Vesputious, who later was to become a great mariner in his own right, and in whose honor, this hemisphere was to be named.

But a more interesting part of the broadcast had to do with an interesting parallel, drawn in lines dating from 1492 and 1945. The point was made that Columbus appeared at a time when the world was just emerging from one age into another, even as it seems we are doing today. The three things at the time of Columbus that revolutionized things were the introduction of the compass from China, the introduction of printing by Guttenburg and the discovery or introduction of gunpowder.

The compass, of course, provided the mariners with a guide, - and greatly needed, too, since the Turks had sealed off Asiatic trade routes through the capture of Constantinople.

The introduction of printing, of course, provided the means for learning to be taken from the hands of a few wise men, and by being placed in books, opened the door for thousands to learn where heretofore but dozens had been able to acquire any education.

The advent of gun powder meant the end of the feudal system, the elimination of strong armed men in armor, and the metamorphose of the little hill-kingsdoms into the great national States. It seems that the introduction of gun powder, - and thence the re-alignment of military concepts, automatically brought about an era of peace, when learning and the arts could flourish, as ignorance on a grand scale gave way to a spread of education's lamp of learning.

You will note, in thinking up today's changes, that there are some striking parallels. Of course "the mighty atom" looks as though it is going to be even more moving than the gun powder. Radio and television, of course, is going to parallel in education what printing did when old Guttenburg struck off his first printed page.

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Science, of course, in radar, air transportation, food processing, etc. ad infinitum, takes a joint route along side the introduction of the compass, while whole hemispheres and worlds await a new Columbus in everything from the region of matter to the realms of international cooperation.

All this may seem pretty trite to you, for you may have long since pondered upon these points, and I have no doubt the newspapers and magazines have stressed these similarities over and over again during the past few years.

But many of the thoughts were original so far as I was concerned, and I pass them along to you, both as a confession of ignorance and evidence of the thrill I experience in looking forward to a new day when courageous souls, once depressed because of the belief that there were no more worlds to conquer, suddenly discover a whole flock of worlds to explore and to brought into control for the benefit of mankind.

Poor you! Everyone in a while you are subjected to one of these endless diatribes, and I know perfectly well that in your busy days, you have little time for such endless "Cayyrings-on". And yet, in spite of that, I seem to go right ahead, and talk, - talk, - talk, regardless. But it is curious, somehow, for in chatting in this manner, I never feel that I am writing, but rather I feel almost as though we were sitting on the gallery at Arenbourg, inhaling the heavy fragrance of butterfly lilies, drinking in the glow of the waxing moon, doubled in brilliance by its reflection on the surface of Cane River, and somehow in tune with enormous forces that swing the planetets (planets) mightily on their unswirling courses, as sound transports to us the song of a waking mocking bird from someplace down by Uncle "our-stone's".....

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1415

October 13th, 1945.
Memorandum to Clipping Service: I have just finished
It's 6:30, and I write this morning from the
library of the big house. I am unfamiliar with this machine,
which may, or may not account for more errors than usual.

Your perfectly sweet note to hand, - with the
quotation from Robert Louis Stevenson. How kind of you to
think of me in reading those lines. But it seems to me
in no way remarkable that in reading them, I should find
your own good self shining through each phrase and sentence.
Were I asked to offer an excerpt from literature that would
best describe you, I should have to search no further than
these lines from R. L. S., although I could add another
page that would append a couple of side lights: - from
R. A. Taylor's Leonardo, "Few of us have not known some
person or persons, so by Nature, lavishly endowed".....

Our week end guest arrived at 4:30 on Friday, and
seems much as usual. Perhaps the most striking feature of his
present make up is the average quality of his conversation.
In one who was accustomed to hold "the tit of talk" in his
own mouth, it is rather surprising to notice gaps in the
normal flow of thought expression or tale-telling. At the
moment he appears to be just like any rather dull business
man, - which is altogether striking, since he used to mani-
fest certain amusing, although sometimes tawdy, flashes of
brilliance. Expressed in another way, it is like seating
one's self in the Alexandria Room of Schraft's Fifth Avenue,
comfortable and pleasantly surrounded by the hall mark of
excellence, and after finishing the meal, suddenly realizing
that the food quality was not above the standard of some non-
descript Coffee Pot or "Rendezvous des Chauffeurs".

For the moment, I am done on this subject, for I learned
nothing of interest to pass along. I think the visit will end
on Sunday or Monday, and I shall touch upon it at another
sitting, if anything develops worthy of mention.

over
I have been thinking of you, and of the
a big opportunity, when the time comes, to follow in the
steps. But the labor and time is that the plan is
the finger, and the enormous difficulty, and the
the finger, and the enormous difficulty, and the
the finger, and the enormous difficulty, and the

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What with school starting again and the gin going full blast, my reader did not reach me last night until after dark, and what with the necessity of withdrawing from the guest, plus the fact that my reader wanted to go to Sammy's, I did not attempt to read the encl sure on the Senator from Miss., but held it until this evening when I may explore it at leisure. Almost any politician on the national stage coming from that State is likely to be ultra something or other, - and usually in the tag department. I know the article is going to supply me with a flock of entertaining points.

Celeste's sister in law, Betty Regard, after three years in South Louisiana, came to Melrose to spend the week end with J. H. and Celeste. Her name is Betty Regard, widow of Celeste's brother, and I may have mentioned her to you before. It was she who effected the Reading Machine in my behalf originally, and it occurs to me that she is well acquainted with the Baton Rouge office of the Federal Relief Office, for she, as Parish head in St. Martinsville, has frequent contact with Baton Rouge. With this in mind, I shall contact her this morning and possibly we may discover that she will be able to pull a couple of wires in the Capitol to put me on a priority for a new Reading Machine. With no reading being done in the big house, - reading aloud, - it would be a great help if I could get my machine back again during these long winter nights just ahead.

On the national scene, don't you love the latest display of wisdom and spirit of good will as demonstrated by those remarkable ladies, styling themselves the Daughters of the American Revolution? Their duplication of the Anderson fiasco trickled through to me over the radio yesterday, when Mrs. Truman announced that in spite of all, she could not cancel her acceptance to take tea with "les tags". Here is one of the first strides on the stairway of retrospection, giving people an opportunity to compare and contrast the courage of the Present First Lady and her predecessor in an almost identical situation. From this distance in time, for about seven years much have elapsed since the Anderson affaire, the public generally can better evaluate Mrs. Roosevelt's reaction and handling of the matter, - and everyone must agree, liking it or not, that she did the handling alright. Perhaps, being something which had never before occurred, it was less easy, or at least, her course of procedure less easy, since it called for some original thought and courage. Surely, with the pattern she then laid down, it should have been easier for la Truman, who obviously missed a big opportunity, when she failed to follow in Mrs. R.'s footsteps. But the important thing is that the pianist, like the singer, reaps an enormous publicity, and thank's to Madam Truman's fumble, Mrs. Roosevelt's stature will make and as a result, must, in proportion in the public

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October 15th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Mrs. Spofford works in New Orleans but maintains a home in Shreveport where her husband lives. It was she who brought Lyle to Melrose the last two times.

On her way back to the Crescent City yesterday, she stopped off at Melrose for dinner, and on leaving said that she expects to drive up to Shreveport every three or four weeks and that she will always bring Lyle with her as far as Melrose. That's nice.

Well, it was a comparatively quiet week end. Lyle arose from his bed at 4 p.m., on Saturday, and as we are now having supper around 5, he somehow converted that meal into breakfast. He seems quite strong and mentally alert, but there was one remark, perhaps two, that I took to be possible "straws in the wind".

"I have given up whiskey completely, and you know, it's a funny thing, but it seems as though I can get almost drunk on three or four glasses of Sherry."

Well, on the face of the threatened monthly schedule, it looks as though we would have an opportunity to observe how the straws fly during the autumn months.

Celeste's sister in law, Better Regard, was here and I talked with her for a few moments on Sunday morning, - one of the circumstances that ruled out Invitation to Learning. But I was glad to be assured that she thought she had influence enough with Baton Rouge to secure a Reading Machine, with my name being placed at the top of the priority list. I shall greatly appreciate that.

I enclose a letter from Mary Rhodes. My secretary didn't make contact with me on Sunday, what with all the guests and all, and I had to grab off a second best reader, and in consequence, I didn't get some of the sentences, but I think there was nothing especially vital in the message. I was interested in her opinion as to la Moore's tendency toward "swagger". I must say that it was more or less

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in line with the impression I received on reading la Moore's account of her appeal or invocation of the veteran's rights, etc.

I did learn of a new magazine, - Ebony, which I understand, has recently appeared, - perhaps one issue, perhaps two. It seems to be devoted to our friends, and as I understand it, carried as much of its message in pictures as in the written word. Perhaps Mr. Pipes and I should contact this publication. Perhaps they might be interested in some of our data.

Betty Regard spoke to me of the publication and I asked Lyle if he had seen it. I think he had, but I wasn't sure, as someone interrupted conversation at that moment. There are two or three people of the race who once were highly publicized but who now, so far as I know, have disappeared from the view of the average reader. For example, I should like to know where the several people involved in the Scottsborough case are now, and what in the world ever happened to Alice Jones, daughter of the New Rochelle garbage man, who married Philip Rhineland. I think Mr. R. died a number of years ago, but I never did hear anything more about his ex-wife. I suppose there are half a dozen other cases I could think of that might be interesting to follow through, and I had better drop Ebony a line and get them straightened out, & the cases not Ebony, - for I fear such a publication cannot run for long, - unless those revolutionary ladies of the D. A. R., keep up their invaluable work of giving such splendid publicity to the negro in art.

I am rather surprised that Dora hasn't mentioned Ebony, but perhaps with all the re-decorating going on of late in Norman, he has forgotten to mention the matter.

I heard of an extraordinary case of physical prowess on the part of a negro, which may, or may not have been in the papers. It seems that in some community, - not far from local railroad tracks, I believe, a negro knocked on the door of a dwelling, and the woman who responded was amazed to see the man holding one of his arms in one hand, the arm having just been severed from his body. I believe the point of the thing that added to the mystery was that the man said he could say how the arm had been cut off. There was another interruption at this point, and I never did get any more particulars, how the man had prevented himself from dying from loss of blood, what happened after he had announced his difficulty, etc., etc. What a place to be left hanging in the air.

What with the bulk of Mary's letter, I shall content myself with this single page for this sitting.....

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October 16th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The enclosure, as you may have already noticed, is from Caroline Ramsey. I shall respond today, saying I will hold the article until she arrives about the middle of November. I hope Lyle and Harnett Kane do not blow in at the same time Miss Ramsey does.

To hand in yesterday's mail came your nice letter, - the joint one, - together with the clippings. We both were enchanted with all. By especially referring to the Jumel Mansion article, you enabled me to ask that it be read forthwith, and I may or may not hear the rest, for the lady is forever getting the clippings tangled up with newspapers and whatnot, unless she inserts them in a holding envelope for inclusion in scrapbooks, - making them buried so far as reference to them goes, at any given moment.

I am so glad, naturally, that Jumel Mansion has had a few rooms put in order. I know you are going to have a pleasant afternoon when opportunity gives you a chance to pass by and see for yourself how Nancy McClelland and all have re-furnished the place.

The Madam has always declared that Jumel Mansion was the only house she saw in New York wherein she felt she would seem to find a home. It certainly must have been lovely in its setting when New York was way off yonder, and from its gallery, one gazed off across virgin fields, untrammelled by asphalt streets and a wilderness of apartment houses.

When I first visited the place, I was under the impression that it had once been the home of Robert Morris, financier of the Revolution, but later I learned that it was not Robert but Grosvenor, - I am uncertain of the spelling. But I think its post Revolutionary period must have been its most interesting time, when la belle Jumel was dispensing hospitality under her final title of Mrs. Aaron Burr.

For dramatic emphasis, possibly for truth, but probably more than anything else, to give a desired balance to their composition, biographers of la Jumel pretty generally seem to have pictured her as never having made much of a social circle to surround herself during her long life, so much of which was spent in the New York area. On my own hook, I have long since come to the conclusion that la Jumel must have had quite a gay set rotating about her tea tables, what with the kind of personality she is bound to have had, and what with the success she enjoyed abroad. It is

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ture that she may never have been able to dent the crust of what was then the "400", but any wife of an Aaron Burr couldn't possibly find herself alone, and I am inclined to believe that possibly one found a lot more brains and good cheer in the Jumel mansion than could be encountered in some of the more formal but less brilliant drawing rooms down town. At the moment, I cannot recall if I have ever heard the Revolutionary name of Jumel Mansion. Surely it must have had one, since every home of such status possessed at least one, and sometimes more. It a title ever comes to hand, ~~it~~ do let me know.

And now I want to tell you something in the blood-boiling department. Jack's brother, Ezra, who is a swell guy, was returning home to Melrose on Sunday night in his own car, after having taken his mother (Miss Willie), his wife and four children to call on kin folk inatchitoches. About mid-way between Melrose and Frenchie's camp (where Mrs. Rand staid for a week), two cars stopped Ezra's. It was some of these old hill-billy deputies from the Sherriff's office.

The dupties made Miss Willie and Ezra's wife and children get out of the car. Then they made Ezra trun the car back up the road, and giving him five dollars, forced him to go to Frenchie's, whom Ezra knows, and buy a pint of whiskey, without telling Frenchie that he was being sent by the Law. Naturally Ezra had to do it, for it doesn't pay for a negro to question the words of a white man.

But Ezra told J. H. yesterday morning, and J. H. was naturally furious. He flew to town without delay, and I pr sume he read a riot act or two to the Sheriff's office, and I hope told the whole posse to keep out of the Melrose area. I myself shall go to town shortly and shall make it a point to pay the Sheriff's office a visit. As always, of course, prohibition is paying a large dividend to the nasty little white trash in this Parish, and I shall be glad when we can again eliminate that Law from the books. In the mean time, unless curbed, the hill-billies are going to fleece the poor negroes, while they let torrents of liquor flow in town where the white folks at the clubs and in the drug stores, - including our own physician from Clouterville allied with one such, - is going full tilt. I may have told you that a week ago Saturday night, the same bunch of deputies stopped a colored boy on the road at night and made him pay five dollars because he had a half of a half pint of liquor in his hip pocket. There is no law to give them a right to do anything of the sort. In other words, it was plain and unvarnished highway robbery. Surely economic and political equalities are terrifice breeders of crime, and I am out to make a racket in behalf of those who a persecuted by the hoodlums.

Alright, that tirade is done, and I must get on to some literary activities forthwith. Thanks again for the nice joint note, dully appreciated by both to whom it was addressed, and thanks, too, for the clippings. Drew Pierson on Sunday, said that Stephen had flown to Europe, but obviously he is still in Walter Reid.....

SSM

1421

October 17th, 1945.
Memorandum to "Lipping Service:

Correspondence time this morning has slipped away, what with two or three friends passing this way for advise on one point or another, and joint exploration of the Opportunity package with one friend, already feeling the pinch of chill that permeates the morning and evening air, now that mid-October is upon us.

I shall accordingly write but briefly at this sitting, and will avail myself of this brief moment to pass along some gossip.

You may recall that I mentioned some time back the opening of a physician's office in town, to be used temporarily in the afternoons, and to be made use of primarily for the issuance of perscriptions of a dubious medical status.

The three brothers in law one day, - perhaps two weeks ago, asked me if I had learned of any scandle (al), emanating from town. I hadn't. They told me. Yesterday, from two sources, I heard the same tale. It seems the office in town has been closed. It also seems that the physician occupying it is currently on bond, having been arrested on the charge of the wife of one of the naval men, stationed at the college in town. The charge seems to be that the physician took a pass at his patient, and I suppose could be quite serious, if the thing should come to Court, - which it may or may not.

It is unfortunate that the physician concerned, and his wife, about a month ago, gave up speaking to their brother and brother in law, - one who has some influence with legal doings in town. Always having fancied themselves beyond the need of courtesy to anyone, they may suddenly be faced by the fact that friends, even relatives, aren't an asset to be disdained.

Up to the present writing, I feel certain, la Grignan has not learned of this latest doings in her own household. I hope she doesn't learn of it before she moves, for if she does there will most certainly be a vast wailing and screaming on the home grounds, which, most naturally, will upset our patient considerably.

Isn't that a pretty kettle of fish to be poised on the brink of boiling over?

over

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Should the thing break out into the news, I assume that it will be explained that physicians are always subject to such accusations. That, of course, is true. In the present instance, however, the charge doesn't astonish me exactly, since two very conservative residents of this neighborhood have been forced to dismiss the same physician abruptly, when after summoning him in case of serious illness, he has taken that opportunity to take a pass at them.

I assume, - although it is pure assumption, that this situation may explain a statement made by the physician the other day to his mother in law, wherein he remarked that should the Shreveport venture prove unprofitable, he thought he might take a try at California. I suppose license to practice is issued by the State, and if Louisiana should withdraw its license, perhaps it is thought California might issue one in its place.

Well, so boils the local pot, and may it not spill over before we are rid of this batch of inhumanities.

At dawn this morning, another, - or possibly the same, - big old egret stalked by by back gallery, and I am hoping that he may like the white garden sufficiently to return to it next Spring when returning from his South American season. If he does, I shall persuade him to step across the road to Arenbourg, where the terrace will afford him an opportunity to exercise his long legs, and the river will offer him good gaming ground for his water sports. With the artificial lake that will be scooped out this winter, he will find a nice nesting place for Mme. Aigrette, and I think he will look very pleasant, what with a background of red, pink and yellow water lilies.

I think Miss Myra has some acquaintance with officers in the Chicago Aviary Department, where, I am told, there are some marvelous white peacocks. As Miss Myra has contemplated introducing peacocks to Devereux, I think we should eventually make arrangements with her to get us an egg or two of the white peacock, for with a couple of aigrettes, the white peacock on the terrace of green what with the deep blue of the river beyond, ought to really be something by way of decors.

Must skip now, but will no doubt arrange a longer sitting on the morrow.....

1311

1423

October 18th, 1945.

Memorandum to "Clipping Service:

"The postman rang twice" yesterday, - an elegant letter from you and one from James. I shall not attempt to compare them as to content, for I know not what Dora's contained, but at face value, the one from you was bound to be twice as good, since it numbered 4 pages as against Dora's two.

What with all the sons of African up to their hips in cotton, either in the field or in the gin, - and from sun up to dark, - it was evident that I would be able to tear off but time enough for one letter, and I need not tell you if yours of Columbus Day or Dora's was the one chosen. Today I shall grab off another tiny segment of time, and tomorrow I shall send along Dora's.

It certainly was good of you to impart so many points of interest in a variety of fields. It goes without saying that the quotations from the Robeson volume interested me much. I have clipped the quotation from the letter and shall read it again within a few days when the weekly rain comes and opportunity arrives with the first sprinkle of rain. And thanks, too, for mentioning the items in this October's issue of the Reader's Digest. I shall turn through that item today at the big house, - if pilgrims don't clutter up the place too much. Today, being Thursday, Dr. Knipmayer will spend the morning, and there is no telling who may honor us this evening, but I shall hope no one will.

It was kind of you to explore the Sargent Prentiss matter in my behalf. There is quite an interesting volume on Sargent Prentiss by his brother, George Prentiss. I have forgotten the exact title of the book, but his brother's name does not appear in the title, as I recall. I am under the impression George Prentiss did not write many books, - perhaps only one, so if you should run across a list of George's books, you probably would have little difficulty in determining which is the one that is biographical.

Like so many volumes written toward the end of the 19th century, it is quite dull in many respects. But at the same time, it is very valuable because it contains so many little items which shed tell-tale gleams of light upon the tiny aspects of the man's problems, which viewed in retrospect, perhaps tell more of the man's happy and unhappy moments that a better balanced volume might.

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You will be struck by the poignancy of his letters from Mississippi to his family in Maine, pleading with them to write him letters as to what they are doing and how they are faring. It is difficult to imagine why the family seemed to neglect him so consistently, especially as he was the one staff on which they leaned, and it was his brilliance and generosity that raised them from poverty and provided them with something like a hundred thousand dollar fund, - quite an imposing (one s) figure in those days, for today it would probably represent about half a million.

You will recall that he eventually married Mary Williams, whose elegant ante bellum home was built on the present site of Longwood, and that he is buried in the Gloucester graveyard, on the Longwood side of the Lower Woodville Road, just opposite Gloucester.

I think I have mentioned to you that this most brilliant of Mississippians had as his best friend, one Thomas Hall, an untutored man who, when Sargent knew him, was the "best planter in the State", according to B. L. C. Wailes. I have so often heard Mme. Hebert, Hall's granddaughter of Bedford Plantation, recite episodes from the inspiring affection which existed between her "diamond in the rough" grandfather and this exquisitely polished young gentleman from Maine.

interruption - Brother has just come for his first lesson. -

Alright. Brother has done his lesson, and, with a pair of shoes to shine, he has headed off down the road, the shoes being almost as big a Brother.

I was so glad to hear particulars covering the Decameron which I had missed, and I think I have already remarked that I likewise missed the succeeding broadcast, but perhaps we may both catch up on lost ones if Columbia issues a script. I reckon we should be hearing from them on that point before long.

I had in mind to speak of a couple of points at length, but I just learn that Dr. Knipmayer is already here, and I have no doubt that he will be invading this place to observe the progress made by the bananas, which continue to grow amazingly.

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6341

I notice what you remarked about the Opportunity Shop, - the fact that item No. 3 will be heading in this way shortly, and the idea that I should find something in Item No. 2 that I could use. I must tell you quite frankly that I did gaze with eyes of yearning at the lovely blue sweater, but that I tried to curb my impetus to set it aside for myself, since it came to me as something designed more for others, and as your agent, it seemed to me only fair to distribute the entire contents (interruption) - To get back to the sweater, - I must confess that with one or two of the other items, I have not as yet apportioned it to any one, with with holding it until it is a little cooler is my idea of having it perform a maximum of service at the time most needed. And so, - unless I find some poor beggar who is actually shivering, I might eventually retain it and keep it to clothe myself, which would make me twice glad, - in view of its donor.

I have heard quite a few good things on the air of late which have made up for the rest of the mis-spent time in listening to clap-trap. Last night from Des Moines, there was a very good account of life in Java, especially in the years between 1918 and 1940. From this unimpassioned account, it does seem as though it were high time so ething were done economically for the natives, who have been paid a few cents a day for their labors over all the long years that they have enjoyed the benefits of Western civilization and exploitation.

You know, one of the strangest things in my mind is the fact that I never think of the Dutch as being especially wealthy, and yet there must be great fortunes in Holland, based on wealth from the Indies, that never flared up enough on the Western horizon to impress me. Of the great fortunes in England, based on exploitation of India, I recall quite a few establishments, - grand country houses and people who have spent the money in such a manner as to make some dent in the bas-relief wherein or whereon some picture might be sketched of the results of great accumulations of worldly goods. Perhaps it is because that I am not very well acquainted with Holland that I am in ignorance of the results of their expenditures, culled from the vast fortunes that have streamed in from the Indies, and yet, with the possible exception of old Philip Sassoon, - I think that was his name, - who had some wonderful Art collections, - especially silver plate, as I recall, - I can't think of any Dutch examples of what can be done by way of creating pleasant country houses and elegant bric-a-brac, although obviously there must have been quite a few stockholders in Indies businesses that would have warranted such investments.

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And this brings one around, of course, ~~the~~ to b
ponder on the stranger fact that today so few people, even
when spendin lots of money on building, seldom if ever produce
anything in houses that is in very good taste, whereas in
contrast, practically every plantation home and city dwelling
of any account at all, - constructed during the first half
of the 19th century in the South, is such a joy to the
eye and such a satisfaction to the soul. To find out why
it should be so, I have thought long and arrived nowhere,
but perhaps we have gone Dutch, and just contented ourselves
with lots of money.

I notice Mr. Truman is much in the news these days, - not
only for his doings but also for an appraisal of his doings up
to now. Last night, - Wednesday, - about 8 or 9 o'clock,
I heard an excellent appraisal by Genet (of the New Yorker) from
Paris. I reckon you are acquainted with Genet's column, or
Paris Letter or whatever. It seems she broadcasts from
Paris every Wednesday night over the "American Broadcasting
System, - whatever that may be, - but soething allied with
the National, I think. I cannot say on what station she
delivered her goods, but it was really elegant. She sounded
much like Dorothy Thompson, and her choice of words to express
her quite terse remarks was or were grand. I think it was
said her real name is Miss Flanner, or some such. My radio
faded at the time the program concluded, and so I did not
find out on which frequency it was filtering in. But I
do recommend it to your consideration, - Wednesday nights between
8 and 10, - but I am not certain of the hour, and I think you
will like it much.

I wanted to say something more about Arenbourg, but
time is running so short. I think we are going to have
quite a few items to include in the house, by way of
openings and things which I have subsequently discovered among
some other treasures in a forgotten barn on this place.
I shall turn to that discussion in my next.

1427

October 19th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

She doesn't know it, but Clemence is going to have
a fit. The package came through in yesterday's post, and
having traveled a little roughly, it appears, I opened it
without delay, checked up on its contents, and believe that
all is in order.

It was so thoughtful of you to make such a splendid
collection, and Clemence is going to have as much fun with
the pieces as with the complete garments. She never fails
to come out with a surprise, and into what she will turn
the odds and end, Heaven alone knows, - a battenburg
parasol, or some such, you may be sure.

When I encountered her at the store the other day,
she looked like a million dollars in the yellow costume, -
the yellow that has the same value as green has when it is
olive. I may have mentioned this before, but I mention it
again regardless. And what she will contrive with the
velvets, I cannot imagine, but it will be something extra-
ordinary. I remember the time when a slip was included in
a package during the summer, and how she exclaimed that she
could now visit her sister in Beaumont. What with another
to hand, there is no telling where she might have a mind
to head out.

The enclosures from Dora and Mrs. Brandon speak for
themselves. I think Dora's letter to la Haygood is fine,
but until I know in my own mind if that individual is in-
terested in our friends, - or is merely holding down a job, -
I would find it impossible to hazard a guess as to any
positive reaction on her part. Isn't it curious that al-
though she wrote Dora in May that she intended coming here,
we never did have even an acknowledgement of our invitation.
Perhaps she did write and the letter was lost, - but that
really happens so rarely.

In yesterday's post from Nashville, Tenn., came a
letter from Dr. Crab, an old acquaintance of the Madam's.
He spoke of his enjoyment in reading Plantation Parade,

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and asked the Madam several points about Joseph Erwin, - her great grandfather who came to Louisiana in 1804 from Nashville. From that, we wonder if the volume also contains a chapter on Joseph Erwin, but of course, we can only wonder, since no copy has as yet come to hand. To have people from other States writing her for particulars regarding the contents of the book, - already read in those places, - naturally makes the Madam hotter and hotter at the old Bayou number, and while I gently drop on an occasional sprinkling of oil, in all truth I get the greatest satisfaction out of her fury at the man of bad manners. Naturally it would be stupid of me to engineer a break with him, but I most certainly will not turn on the sun of cordiality, nor will I in any way attempt to abate her wrath.

It is pleasant to report that the weather continues to hold, and Fair and "continued Warm, is the order of the day for local prognosticators. In consequence of this, the cotton continues to roll, and I learn "in a round about way" that Peter Metoyer and his family are gathering their crop to such an extent that, weather holding, they should be finished by the middle of November. So be it.

Getting stronger slowly, the Madam now is itching to get her foot in the road toward South Louisiana, and declares she will not go without me. I have no intention of making such a trip, and I shall try to send her with a driver and someone, - although I cannot think of the name of such a lucky person.

Day before yesterday, she remarked upon the pretty ante bellum windows in the Loom House, and said we should eventually remove them for Arenbourg, when I get around to fixing up that place about the first of the year. At the same time, she remarked that I ought to really take over Dr. Miller's cabin or one of the other houses, so that I could keep my papers there and not be disturbed whenever Lyle comes in unexpectedly. It is curious how she honestly favors getting Arenbourg fixed up, and at the same time never seems to dream that once it is fixed, I shall be spending most of my time there. She refers to the place as "Cane River House", and I think she is enchanted with the idea, - not entirely her own, so far as originality is concerned, - that it will make a lovely spot wherein a concentration of Cane River treasures may be housed. I shouldn't mind housing a few of the diaries, papers, documents, etc., there, it is quite true, but at the same time, I shall most certainly give an eye to housing myself, too, for the greater part of the day, as the transition is gradually effected during the ensuing months.

So things turn in these parts, and I must skip momentarily..

1429

October 20th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The enclosure from little Miss Robina is of no especial interest, save that it reveals the Cane River article is sailing around Shreveport, while I await illustrations from little Miss Ramsey to get the thing submitted for publication.

I reckon Mrs. Rand never thought that someone might copy the article and by re-arranging it a little, submit it for publication without illustrations.

I telephoned Mrs. Rand's sister, who did the typing, and asked her to have Mrs. Rand return the copy to her. Mrs. Rand will be in a panic when she hears the thing got out of hand in Shreveport, and I have a feeling she will be driving up from Alexandria today to express her regrets.

Essae Mae is scheduled to arrive sometime today, too, - with a view of spending the week end, I suppose.

Pat came home either late last night or very early this morning, for I found a large stalk of butterfly lilies stuck in the handle of my screen door, when I first issued forth this morning to toss a biscuit to the cats. I haven't seen Pat as yet, but shall enjoy doing so shortly. I reckon he will return to Baton Rouge tomorrow.

Charles Mazurette will also come in this morning from New Orleans, and that will be pleasant to hear the late t wrinkle from that place, although on the data covering the riger, perhaps I shall be able to tell him as much as he can tell me.

The post card is of no especial interest, save that it comes from Dr. Miller, and of course really say very little or nothing.

Mr. Bachelier's letter, likewise, is of little interest, except that it gives another example of his splendid philosophy, and at the same time indicates his current activities. I must write him a little note this morning. For the new house he is building in Natchitoches, he is making use of the lumber in an old ante bellum barn, - or rather a plantation store, located on his Little River property. I am sure that building contains some excellent lumber, - and surely it should be well seasoned, and I shall ask him to remember Arenbourg in case

there are any extra sills or beams which he will not find need for in his Natchitoches construction.

I have a slight headache this morning, and what with a flock of things impending before the sun has crossed the sky, I think I shall fold up, if you will pardon me. 19:04 10/10/1941

I was quite surprised in yesterday's mail to find a package for me, - an elegant role of magazines which must have tarried by the way side, for you mentioned sending them some time back. But come through they did, and in good order, and I shall greatly enjoy running through them over Sunday.

There was also a package from Lyle, sending me a pair of felt slippers, designed to keep my "footsies" warm on cold mornings, as I sit at this desk. When here last, he threatened to send some, but he has threatened so many times in the past on one point or another that I had completely forgotten the matter until they arrived.

I guess I don't know a anything else at the moment so will fold temporarily.....

A view of spending the week end, I am pose.

[illegible]

The post card is of no especial interest, save that it comes from Dr. Miller, and of course really say very little or nothing.

Mr. Baehleier's letter, likewise, is of little interest, except that it gives another example of his splendid philosophy, and at the same time indicates his current activities. I must wait a little while for his morning note. For the new house he is building in Ketchikan, he is making use of the lumber in an old water cellar barn, - or rather a plantation store, located on the Little River property. I am sure that building denotes some excellent lumber - and surely it should be well seasoned, and I shall ask him to remember Archibald in case

a horsewhip and attacked him. Now, you know.....
a certain amount of work, the Mahan would have grappled up
it's certain writer, - obviously "Lyle", - had not produced
out of line and spirit of the piece is the remark that

October 22nd, 1945. I came up from L. S. U. for the week end. Charles Lammotte arrived from New Orleans, and was here for dinner. Saturday in these parts. But

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Sunday afternoon, Miss Culver, the Madam and I see the Madam's bedroom, while Miss Culver read the Chatel in Shitwaste chapter from the forth coming volume of Bayon number. It was bad, if truth and understanding for anything in works passing themselves off for histo documents.

The final page in the chapter may have been conceived as slap-stick, and it is to be hoped that the general public will read it as such, but it comes so close to being literal that there is but a hairline between the one and the other.

The strange thing about the composition is the fact that the author most obviously wants to stand in with Melrose for he thinks Melrose and the Melrosians important, and yet he has so thoroughly cooked his goose and even Dor might be welcomed to serve it up.

It is astonishing, too, that he failed in his his account of Melrose so completely. I think you are quite well versed in its story, and you will accordingly be surprised to hear him say that the Metoyers lost Melro in 1847, - much before the Civil War, whereas one rema thing about the Metoyers was that they held Melrose ri down through the Civil War and Reconstruction. Of cou he failed to get the significance of the African House completely, and failed to sense the fact that it was t basic layout on which all the Ile Breville houses were t. He says the houses are of West Indian origina, - whate is.

We read one other chapter, - the Joseph Erwin one. The chapter being with styling the man as "rip-snortin or some such, whereas there is nothing in the world to diocate the man merited such adjectives, and throughout took, he refers to Joseph Erwin as "Joe" It is as shock ng as though I had always referred to B. L. W. W as "Ben."

- But of this, it must be admitted: the author appears to know what the public wants to read, and I am sure the book will have considerable success. I might add that the line in the final chapter on Melrose which is so terrible

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out of line and spirit of the place is the remark that if a certain writer, - obviously Lyle, - had not produced a certain amount of work, the Madam would have grabbed up a horsewhip and attacked him. Now, you know.....

It was a fairly busy Saturday in these parts. Pat came up from L. S. U. for the week end. Charles Mazurette arrived from New Orleans, and was here for dinner. In the afternoon, Miss Sarah Jones, of the Library Commission, brought her mother to call. As they left, Miss Sally He tzog came, and with her her widowed daughter, Mrs. Noe and the latter's son. The two last named remained for a while and then ran over to the priests and then returned here and picked up Miss Sally. But before they left, la belle Essae Mae arrived for the week end, - so what with Henrys running in and out and the usual hubbub of Saturday, we had quite a busy day.

I learned two or three things from Essae Mae that interested me: - an attempt will be made to incorporate the Library Commission into the State's Constitution, as a part of the established order. Up to now, it has been dependant upon the yearly appropriations of the Legislature, and during the Same Jones administration, - and this was a surprise, - it came an inch within extinction. It seems Sam Jones declared he would not sign the appropriation and that the Commission could just as well be absorbed by L. S. U. Huhmmmm.

I also learned from Essae Mae that she had not heard from Caroline Ramsey in several months. She asked me if I had heard from her; and I lied and said that I had heard only indirectly, - and that that news was that she had undergone a prolonged illness during the summer. I gather from this statement that Caroline is hopelessly behind in her correspondence and as I believe she has a few more pictures to make for the Library Commission, I am going ahead on the assumption that I had better "nail her paddles to the floor". - if she does pass this way on November 16th, - and get the illustrations for the stuff we have in mind doing, taken care of then and there before letting her get away.

I had hoped that Lyle and old man bayou would not be here at the same time Miss Ramsey was scheduled to appear. At this writing, I feel quite sure that the bayou will not be here, since he has seemingly so definitely parked himself beyond the entrance gate, once and for all.

There is to be a book fair in Dallas on Nov. 7, 8 and 9th, and already the bayou has asked Essae Mae if he can't ride over with her. Houghton-Mifflin has asked Lyle to go, - I presume because of hope for publicity on the forthcoming "Gumbo-Ya Ya", not the list for release on Nov. 12th.

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I presume Lyle will not go, as Miss Culver thinks the trip would be quite enervating, and I think it would be wiser for him to conserve his energies, - if, indeed, he is planning to make a come-back. The fact that he was able to tumble out of bed at 4 p.m., on Saturday a week ago, when visiting Melrose, leads one to speculate on what hour he might arise, - if ever, - should he undertake a trip that would be twice as long.

According to Essae Mae, as from last Spring, his tank balance was between 3 and 4 thousand dollars. With six months having elapsed, one wonders how much of that sum is left, if his expenditures, as it appears, are about on a level with the former years. That certainly would not carry him through a twelfth-month, and after that, Heaven only knows. People seem to think he would refuse to accept poverty with grace, and in the event he should find himself without funds, he might, according to the speculations of the Madam, attempt to end his financial troubles, abruptly by suicide. But those are merely speculations, of course, and a hundred things might turn to put things to rights before such a calamity should impend.

By some miracle, I got around to hear Invitation to Learning all by myself, - and I liked it, - John Simons' volume on the Renaissance. I have never read the book, but the discussion made me want to read it sometime. If you, too, were able to listen without too much excitement going on around you, I am quite sure you were made joyful within at the display of exquisite courtesy on the part of the three gentlemen constituting the set-up. Somehow their learning, the consideration for each other's view points and their ability to stick to their own convictions without ruffling up each other's hair was illustrative of as high a point in contemporary human relations as we are likely to run across in many a day. I envisioned all three of them, as eventually gracing the terrace at Arentbourg and making intellectual and social life the sweeter by their presence.

Outside there is a cold drizzling rain, and although it is already 7 a.m., the heavy clouds tend to hold back the dawn. Within it is bright and cheery enough, with a good fire crackling on the hearth, and Little King and Peter have dropped by, the former just having bought himself a fine pair of rubber toots, which he will try on, as soon as he and Peter have warmed their toes, and then they will start out to gather pecaness which last night high wind blew down. The cotton will not be picked today, what with all the dampness, but the crop will be finished soon, or the cows will be turned into the fields to fatten on the cotton seed, - and the Peter Netoyers will move to a new home.....

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I am so glad to have a detailed account of the Brooklyn Museum "Life on the Mississippi" show. It sounded so good, and the enumeration of some of the titles I gave me a little mental tour all by myself as I recalled such items as the Night Scene on the Bayou, the Queen of the West, etc. And speaking of the latter item, it recalled to mind the most hilarious title of the boats of that era: - "The Belle of the Bends".

I am glad, too, that you mentioned the later print, done in the 1870's, of DeSoto Discovering the Mississippi". I heard a most interesting account of that remarkable exploration the other day, where in it said his wife accompanied him across the Atlantic, remaining in Cuba when he set out for his search for gold on the main land. What Cuba was like for any Spanish lady in the late 1530's is difficult to conceive. What America could have been like for DeSoto himself is equally difficult to picture. I know some of the country is explored, and even today, it would be rather heroic for a group of men to undertake, even though the wild animal and Indian hazards are no more.

It seems that some historians have stressed Desoto's cruelty, but this account pointed out that today's reader of DeSoto's travels must bear in mind that his journey took him through lands where the Indian was likely to be even more cruel than the Spaniard, and accordingly it was almost imperative, if he were to survive, to make himself even more accomplished in the art of striking fear into the human heart if he were ever to get anywhere. Well, he got quite a ways, and I never did learn what happened to his poor wife, sitting off yonder in Cuta awaiting his return.

A two hour corridor of time intervened between the above paragraph and this. Brother (J. C. Hunter) arrived at 6:45 for his day's learning and we have covered practically everything from oats, - through the alphabet, - to kangaroos, - the latter being quite unknown to Brother heretofore, and fascinating him.

DEMI

1435

The Tilloah-Egon episode is really something. Surely it scarcely seems as though he could have forgotten the whole business, especially as the matter concerned one whom he had known so long and one to whom a job was so justly deserved. Your suspicion that a job for his own offspring may have accounted for the "forgetfulness" probably hits the nail slap on the head. But thank Heaven Ego was encountered, by some kindly Fate, and I do hope circumstances of one sort or another may permit a personal contact shortly.

In my opinion, it would be perfectly alright, - on contacting Egon, - to include everyone in the matter of souvenirs of the old days. So far as I am concerned, I would trust Egon utterly in matters of confidence.

If I may make a suggestion, I would say that if you do not care to indicate a direct contact with former associates, it might easily be pointed out that in the N. Y. P. Library or in a book shop or perhaps even in the street, you encountered a friend who had many particulars to tell of things that had transpired in the land of cotton. I so much esteem so many of Egon's splendid qualities that I should always like to feel that eventually a contact may be established and that he might eventually, when things are more satisfactorily established, take time out to pass this way, to drink in the country, which I feel certain he would like, and to share thoughts and enthusiasms, different from ours, possibly, but nevertheless never at variance with them, even though different. There are so many grand people in this world if one only has the good fortune to contact them. Egon, I think, is one of these, and since circumstances never enable us to establish too many such contacts, we would do well to include him in the list of those among those who will one day stand for Arentbourg, when Arentbourg becomes a symbol of the type of people who are beacon lights in our variety of civilization.

I forgot to mention in yesterday's letter that Miss Culver told me Mr. Kane is writing a novel. I know not if it is a contemporary subject or an historic one, but I shudder at the thought of what might happen in the latter eventuality.

In regard to Plantation Parade, we have decided to say, in response to immediate inquiries, that we have not as yet received our copy, paid for in August, from Mr. Kane. After the first wave of pangyrics, following its first reviews, I may take occasion, as a resident of Melrose, to do some "Second Thoughts on First Readings", in the form of an article for the Times-Picayune, etc., and possibly I shall do a book review or two in certain sections of the State, wherein I shall discuss the latest opus to slight advantage to its author. More on this point shortly.....

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October 25th, 1945.
Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I had an enclosure to send you but I seem to have misplaced it. It was a letter in yesterday's post from Miss Rotina, saying that Mr. Kane had sent a volume of his new book to one of his friends in Shreveport. That isn't important, save that it shows that he is able to forward this item to some people, even though none has come through to Melrose as yet, in spite of the August check sent him for the volume, - a check which he accepted.

I should have an enclosure to send from Dora, too, but yesterday's pecan activities kept Mr. Brew from getting to me, and so I shall have to hold yesterday's incoming mail until later this morning, - after the postman has departed.

I missed the President's speech on military training yesterday noon, but caught up with it last night when my favorite station, WHO, Des Moines, re-broadcast it.

I thought it a good speech, even though I am not sure that I concur with his proposal to maintain a small armed force and a large trained reserve, made up from the ranks of those over 18 who have had a year's training. I think I have expressed myself before on universal military training. I believe that it would be better to train, say, 150 youths from each county in the United States in the mechanics of modern scientific warfare, and not clutter up a million parade grounds with millions of youths doing squads right and all that sort of thing. As there are 3,000 counties in the United States, 150 times 3,000 would present quite an imposing array in case of hostilities, while not a comparatively small regular armed force be maintained but rather a fairly large one. I believed in a trained army and navy, and the money used to train every youth of 18, regardless of their fitness for such training, could much better be used for the maintenance of the army and devote the balance of military energies to the training of experts in the youthful groups, as mentioned in the 150 be ngs selected from each of the nation's counties.

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I may or may not have mentioned something Dan told me of a youthful Ph. D., inducted in the arm, and put through the usual training. Dan said the youth was really very smart, but totally unsuited for the useless marching up and down that seems to be the lot of all soldiers in camp life. Dan said it was both pitiful and hilarious to see the poor Ph. D., everytime the commanding officer shouted: "About Face", - for although simple enough as a military tactic, the poor fellow would invariably fall flat on his face, never seeming to be able to execute such an order although undoubtedly possessed of mental equipment that would have out-shone his commanding officers a million times in any other manifestation of mental agility.

I meant to mention in yesterday's letter that Essae Mae read me a very amusing story in a collection by William Marsh, - the volume entitled "Trial Balance". The short story referred to in that collection is entitled "Monument (or Memorial) to the Slain". It is exceptionally well written, and is a marvelous satire on the activities of the Vice Squads that are forever appearing like ticks on the body politic. Some ancient Greek or some such, once said that a certain number of fleas on a dog was good, since it kept him more or less occupied at otherwise dull moments. Perhaps the same could be said for the presence of Women's Temperance Unions, Purity Leagues for literature, etc., but Prohibition proved, of course, that horrors of what happens when such things get out of hand, and while this short story deals with a most minor matter, it is so splendidly written and such excellent satire against such business that I recommend it most highly, should you chance to run across it.

When Dr. Knipmayer comes by tomorrow about 11, I think I shall accompany him down to Magnolia for lunch with Miss Sally. Up to now, I haven't heard from her in reference to the 24 Mile Ferry Billiard Table, and bearding her in her den will afford me an opportunity to push her a little bit.

This afternoon, - or possibly Friday, I am thinking of making a round to Madame Autin's house, - a picture of which I think you have seen from the Ramsey collection. I don't know who owns the place, but I am sure the Henrys own an undivided three-fifths, or some such confusing percentage, - and they may own all of it. In the house still remains a hand made armoire, - a very simple, plain one, but very nice and doubtly interesting since it is a Cane River antique, having been made by a slave in ante bellum times. The Madam wants to get it, with a view of giving it to me, - for Mme. Autin gave it to her before her death, and I must say it would be

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both practical and fitting for Arentbourg. Accordingly, if the current drizzles continue and the cotton fields are afloat, I shall take Fugabou and Same Peace and slide up to the old deserted house and load in the armoire. The old house, about to fall down, also has some plain old hardware, - big hinges, locks, etc., which I shall also include in the haul, if they are still there. It seems to me there are a couple of nice doors, too, and I shall take them, too, if possible. It is criminal to lift these things, in a way, but in another, it seems even more so when one realizes that the old house is headed toward collapse and unless these precious mementoes of ante bellum days are saved now, they will eventually end up in bonfires and the junkman's cauldron.

With the Henrys having control of the property, it seems so strange that Paynie should not have rescued the old house and fixed himself up a perfectly elegant country place, for he is rich and he and his wife, Frances, have just spent thousands of dollars to fix up a most non-descript matter of fact house in Natchitoches.

Both of them, however, lack the mellowness to make such a place as Mme. Autin's harmonious, but they might eventually grow up to the house, and in saving the place, something marvelously charming from the past would have been preserved for posterity, - but of course the five cent cigar doesn't know the meaning of such expressions.

But enough on that score, and I shall save what I can for Arentbourg, on the assumption that the other house is going to be aloud to crash. If my some miracle within the next six months, so a thought should be given to saving it, I shall give back whatever hardware I find, keeping only the armoire, but if the thing does collapse, then we shall at least have the satisfaction of having rescued something.

Revolution in Cotton has just come to hand, and I am so anxious to get to reading on it. It was characteristically thoughtful of you to forward this item, and I shall like it doubtly for your presence in spirit.....

0441

From the cards searched I have sent from time to time I feel certain that you may be able to locate him more definitely. It is noted on the map, it will be remembered in between Alfred and the map, and may have the name of Alfred and the map. It is a unique thing that Alfred's name appears as the last before owner, before it passed

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

May I congratulate you on your remarkable findings and
in the Geodetic Department.

It goes without saying that I was completely enchanted to learn of your discovery of all these delightful items. I understand only as I think of how much at variance they must be with the curious sketches I used to make to acquaint you with the neighborhoods covered by these valuable items. You mention that you do not find 24 Mile Ferry. It would not be on the Map. It is on the West side of Cane River, perhaps five miles below Cane River bridge, and just about at the North point of the Magnolia line. That would make it about 24 miles below Natchitoches, - by the meanderings of the river, not in a straight line. It would appear that it was never more than a stopping point on the road to Alexandria from Natchitoches, and as I understand it, the place where the old Trace swerved off to the West toward San Antonio and Mexico City. I reckon in its palmyest days, - say the 1840's it never represented much more in outlay than a tavern, perhaps a general store, and probably a house or two.

When General Banks, - the Unionist, marched southward from Grand Ecore and Natchitoches to Alexandria, he followed Cane River, at least for the first 40 miles. From what I can discover, the main body of his troops (troops?), took the high road on the West Bank of Cane River as far as 24 Mile Ferry, where it crossed to the East bank. Lots of Prudhomme mansions were turned on the West bank, between Bermuda and Natchitoches, although some on the East bank were also set ablaze. I am sure, however, that at least a section of the Army passed along the East bank, passed Arrentbourg, - the present terrace is the former site of the original river road, for old slaves recall that the soldiers passed by Melrose about noon.

But today nothing remains at 24 Mile Ferry but the old store, - with the billiard table on the gallery, exposed to the weather. There is no more Ferry, of course, because the new Louisiana Purchase Road on the East bank of Cane River, crossing from the West to the East, going South, at Bermuda, precludes any necessity for a ferry. And of course the old Natchez-San Antonio-Mexico City Trail has been supplanted by modern cement roads that pass miles from this point on the Cane River. The mulatto family, - Dupree, formerly owned what was called 24 Mile Ferry, but I think Hyman Cohen of Lake View plantation, now controls this property.

1440

From the crude sketches I have sent from time to time, I feel certain that you may be able to locate Arenbourg without difficulty. If labeled on the map, it will be sandwiched in between Alfred Llorenz and Alphonse Metoyer, and may bear the name of Agnes Metoyer or Dan Henry. It is a curious thing that Agnes Metoyer's name appears as the last Metoyer owner, before it passed to the Henrys just a few years ago, for another Agnes Metoyer, wife of Grandpere, - he also had a daughter by the same name, - has been associated with the property since colonial times. Certain abstracts refer to Agnes Metoyer as being a free woman of color, and therefore entitled to an unusual status, as guaranteed by the Treaty of Paris, covering all people of color, enjoying freedom prior to 1775. I understand none of these references, for the Treaty of Paris, signed at Versailles by Benjamin Franklin and others in 1783, is a document which brought the United States into being, but for some strange reason, I never have seen a copy of that famous document, although I have often visited the room in the Hotel des Affaires Etrangeres, on the opposite side of the street from the Palace of Versailles, to the left, as one enters the Courtyard of the Palace, - about opposite the Galerie des Batailles. I shall be delighted to see the maps, but the complete enchantment will come only when we are able to spread them out on the big billiard table at Arenbourg and examine them together. I have thought that eventually, should there be a fitting place for such a business, we might have one wall somewhere at Arenbourg, whereon would be sketched the general course of the river, say from Natchitoches to Magnolia, with sketches of the houses at their property points, indicating the vanished mansions in one color, and the existing ones in another. Surely these maps would help a lot in doing this, aside from the constant references we shall want to make to them for other data.

Now if the above paragraph isn't a round about business, - from Agnes Metoyer of Arenbourg to Versailles, then I give up.

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Once I saw a map of the Natchez District, belonging to an oil man, and from your description, it must have been the parent of the present ones. This was in 1941, and the map was valued at \$210.00. Isn't it good that the Government got in behind this business and by cutting costs brought it nearer the reach of people who would find such a charge prohibitive? I never knew there was such a map of this region, however, and I assumed that the Natchez District one was stirred up for the Miss. River Commission, for use in making surveys of water control, drainage, erosion studies, etc. At that time, I saw less than I do now, and I am sure that with the aid of my reading glass, I shall readily make out all the points of interest. Because of the enclosures, I shall confine myself to this page, but should love to go on endlessly. Again my congratulations..

1441

October 27th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To paraphrase Marlowe's "Jew of Malta": - So many treasures in one little mail!

Yesterday, what with a couple of additional and unexpected pupils arriving at 7 a.m., I failed to get out any mail, but the never failing postman and his polecat was doubly generous, and brought from this week end on out, - thanks to him and to you, - I have no dearth of happiness and companionship.

I need not say how much the portraits mean to me, for well do you know how much it means to have a likeness to turn to when a moment of leisure comes to hand, and one to glance at even in the midst of uninterrupted tasks that unroll along a keyboard.

I think both portraits mean as much to me as they could to anyone. The one in which a single figure appears is of course very exclusively all mine, not only for the excellence of the portrait but for its background. "One Alone", and yet a whole world and the endlessness of time seems inherent in it. Obviously executed in the hills, there is a quality about it that is as complete and as all-embracing as one that will eventually be taken in the Delta, where the great arch of sky over the flat lands somehow produces the same eternity of things that are good as does everything in this picture which will always mean so much to me.

In the absence of my reader yesterday, I have not as yet read the notations on the reverse of these two items, but even without reading that, I readily recognize the four beings in the other picture, and I am enchanted to have present not only the paramount personality but also those who are such a good part of the happiness that radiates from it. The presences of the pet in the foreground is somehow a counter part of grandpa doing his disappearing act in the photo taken here by Miss Ramsey. But there is a other feature in that photograph which is an especially precious souvenir to me, - the coat, and especially the fur piece, which was always pretty nice before but which somehow became more than lovely one evening about 6 years ago, when I came quite close to it on the lower level of Pennsylvania Station. As I sped across the Jerseys through that night, I constantly found myself humming instinctively a little tune from a musical comedy I had seen in Paris a few years before: "Ca, c'est une chose qu'on perd pas oubliée." Thanks a million for these lovely souvenirs. I shall treasure them always.

1442

The postman brought me a letter, too, which I shall read within the hour, but shall not have an opportunity to refer to in this note, but I shall mention the receipt of the maps which are perfectly elegant, for they came to hand in the same mail.

I am so glad you have these, too, for we may readily touch upon geographical situations at will, with the understanding that each of us will have a clear understanding of "where" we are talking about.

I was glad to notice that the map clearly indicates that section of the river going by Arentbourg, and that one can so easily determine how it is that while general speaking Cane River flows in a direction from North East West to South East, at Arentbourg, thanks to its meanderings, it actually flows from the North East toward the South West. I think that point is quite important, for sun down is the pleasantest time of the day, and thanks to the direction of the river at this point, one may drink in the beauties of reflection and constantly changing lights on the river's surface at the greatest advantage from the terrace during that part of the day, when often we shall sup in the open and lounge on the gallery as twilight fuses into dark. Often shall we see the liquid bow of the new moon dipping gradually into the western sky and caught and held for a while in the surface of the river, to be succeeded by a deeper carpet of blue, spangled by a million stars.

And speaking of stars, I headed out last evening after dark to call on Clemence. I had sent the pieces, included in Shipment No. 3, when Mary Frances came by with Brother the other morning. Clemence, first off, asked me to say to you how much these pieces had meant to her. She pointed with pride to the new eye-lit curtains in the middle room of her catin, and I must say they did give a decided homey atmosphere to an otherwise somewhat barren room. Clemence has always liked curtains, and I remember some years back, after having given Miss Rotina a goose, already prepared for putting in the oven, she said, in response to an inquiry of what kind of present she would like, that nothing would please her so much as some curtains. Miss Rotina sent some material which, because of certain exigencies, had to be converted into clothing, but now, thanks to you, Clemence has her curtains, and is as happy as a clam about the whole thing.

After showing me her latest wrinkle in Interior Decorating, she trotted out a very smart looking gown she had just made for Mary Frances to wear to school. It was contrived from the pieces of the blue material, - the figured stuff, and I must say you would have been proud of the good purpose to which it had been put.

1443

I still have quite a few treasures from this splendid collection, and this week end I expect to pass along further gladness which you have supplied these kindly but straightened people.

I learned that Fugatou's mama, - and Mr. Brew's grandma, who brought him up, was planning to go up to Bermuda to visit her daughter there, and knowing that any lady in these parts just adores pink slips, I did it up in a special package, along with some medicine that replaces the coffee stimulant she cannot take, and set the whole business along by Mr. Brew the other evening. I shall see that lady today before she heads out for Bermuda, and I know there will be showers of blessings upon your head, thanks to the gift. I always remember what Clemence said when she received a slip ever so many months back: - "Now there ain't no reason why I can't go a-visitin' my sister off yonder in Beaumont, what with this fine under thing!"

As Miss Sally failed to mention anything about seeing the owner of the billiard table, when I was at Magnolia on Thursday, I conclude my request merely puzzled her. She is a very gracious lady, as kindly a person as one could imagine and a most generous hostess, but I think my request that she speak to the owner of the table in my behalf put her in as much of a quandary as a similar request might put, - let me see, - oh, yes, might put Miss Burrow, - the lady who used to do things on the second floor of 46th Street.

Vaguely, Miss Sally somehow mentioned her puzzlement to Celeste yesterday, and Celeste in turn mentioned it to me, offering to contact the owner in my behalf, as she is acquainted with the family. Accordingly, I gave her the go-ahead signal, so I reckon we are eventually in line to lay out hand on the thing, as a rarity and a practice bit of furniture for Arentbourg.

Quite unexpectedly, Charles Mazurette came up from Little River yesterday morning, and after dinner, took off for Natchitoches, when he will go to New Orleans today, to remain about two weeks. He had little news, but it was pleasant to compare notes with him on the cotton, pecan and cane situation in his area.

Billie Hinton, the clerk, - his wife being away, - also came to inner. Billy told me that a man passes by Melrose every once in a while, repairing odds and ends, and mostly putting in broken window panes, etc. Billy showed him the large door from the Jean Baptiste house, from which perhaps 20 of the 36 panes are missing. The man gave him quite a reasonable price for putting those panes back in place, and so I asked that on his next round he be instructed to carry out the work. In the mean time, Billy has asked if he himself might put the door back in order, - re-finishing it, and of course that delighted me, as Billy is an artist with finishing tools.

1444

The three of us dined alone, as the Madam did not come down to dinner. I think she may have taken codine during the night, as she fussed a great deal at Aurelia during the morning, and in her conversation jumped helter-skelter, from one subject to another and so rapidly, that things did not seem in perfect balance. By supper time, however, everything seemed to be functioning normally, and all was in the best of all kinds of worlds.

Of other little details, I have none at the moment, save that we are scheduled to have additional sprayers, - huge machines, to use on the pecane trees next spring, and we are also acquiring a cotton picker, it is said. Now there is a revolution landing slap in our midst, and we shall speculate on what that means shortly.

Must gallop now. Thanks again and again for all the happiness you have bestowed upon us during this week end, and for the portraits which will carry us over all the days ahead.....

1445

Memorandum to Clippin Service:

Sunday is well under way, with Invitation to Learning just finished and dinner just in the offing. I believe the hour's difference in timing brings you Invitation a little closer to the last cup of Sunday morning breakfast coffee, while it falls nearer the soup course in these parts.

I liked today's discussion of Xenophon's opus, along with its parallels as between the absence of political mindedness as is apparant both today and 2,300 years ago. I think I wouldn't care to read the book in question, however, what with a lot of other things that I should like to read more.

There was an obituary in yesterday's Tensas (La.) Gazette, which interested me much, - that of Benjamin Farrar Young, of Saint Joseph, Louisiana, - opposite Rodney, Miss.

Mr. Young was possessed of a treasure house of Natchez documents, old diaries, newspapers, plantation account books, etc.

Wehn laying out the campaign for the Archives Department for the Louisiana Library Commission, I secretly had the acquisition of this collection in mind as one of the most notable accumulations to be found outside Laurel Hill. And Mr. Young's papers had a decided bearing on the Laurel Hill neighborhood, - and one time owners.

I should like to sketch the geneology briefly. The Ellis girls of the second creek neighborhood married well. One married Benjamin Farrar, their child being Mrs. Mercer of Laurel Hill. Another of these Ellis girls married George Rapalha (pronounced Rapalee), - her name was Jane and she owned Beauz Prex Plantation adjoining Laurel Hill and she built the Mercer House on Court House Square in Natchez. A third Ellis girl married a Mr. Young.

When Aunt Jane Rajapljia died, she left the town house to her niece, Mrs. Mercer; some other property to "Cousin" Eliza Young (confident of Dr. Mercer), and Beaux Pres Plantation to Cousin Eliz's brother, Benjamin Farrar Young.

The Beaux Pres gardens were wonderful, - although devastated today, one can still find traces of the great boxwood labyrinths, etc. The library was imposing, too, especially in private documents and bound newspapers of earliest times. On Mr. Young's death, Beaux Pres passed to his son, Benjamin Ferrar Young, a youth who had been educated at Harvard and very cultivated, but excentric.

1446

in the mid 1880's, it was this younger Mr. Young who used to dress himself faultlessly in white linen suit, but without shoes or stockings and a hat, would order a flat top wagon to his front gate. A crimson plush rocking chair of imposing proportions, would be placed on the flat top of the wagon, and there Mr. Young would seat himself, heading out the 15 mile trip to Natchez, the wagon drawn by white oxen, driven by a negro walking along side. The Traces from Beaux Pres to Natchez were corridors of blossoming greenery, but where ever a pool of sunshine broke through the canopy of trees, that place was anticipated by a colored boy, standing behind Mr. Young's rocking chair, and the servant would elevate a huge umbrella, to ward off the sun.

Although exquisite, as well as curious, Mr. Young never did marry, although he was well taken care of by his faithful servants, one of whom, - the butler, always at nightfall, locked the great iron gates of Beau Pres, and presented the key to his master with a solemn bow, saying: "All is in order." It was just a detail that during the years, the fences to either side of the great gates had completely disappeared after ages of neglect. But the gates were locked regardless.

On Mr. Young's death the family Bible went to a niece. It remained on her entrance hall table for years, and people thumbed it through it at random, - people who might be awaiting the appearance of Mrs. Young when they called on her. Years after, Mrs. Young herself told me, she discovered that in the Bible where the family data covering births, marriages and deaths were recorded, she discovered to her consternation one day, that her uncle had neatly recorded a great number of births, - his mulatto children, along with or following the lists of distinguished ancestors, who had been therein recorded down through the years. In her embarrassment, Mrs. Young had snipped out these names with her embroidery scissors. I told her I could slap her down for that.

Now this family Bible was the only thing she received from Beaux Pres's library, but all the vast assortment of valuable documents went to a nephew, Benjamin Ferrar Young, whose death appears in this week's Texas Gazette. All the papers were intact in his St. Joseph, La., home, and by now, I suppose, they have gone the same way, - or at least by fire, - in a great big clean-up, or they will go shortly, - and I regret that I am not in the neighborhood to attempt a rescue.

With the disappearance, I'm afraid the destruction, - of this precious material, goes one of three integral collections on which a true picture of the life and times of Adams County at his most colorful era (interruption) rests. For aside from this Young collection is the vast Laurel Hill treasure, and the 18 tin boxes at Miss Louise Butler's The Cottage. Miss Louise's

1447

October 30th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Time has ganged up against correspondence this morning, what with my early morning scholar arriving before good day-break, and a hundred little interruptions following our school session.

I do want to get off just a line, however, and enclose the letters from Dora and Caroline Dormon. Neither are of any especial interest, and yet they both are little segements in the pattern that goes in to keep their portraits the clearer.

Caroline's reference to the migration of the wild geese seems especially good, I think. I must say the word "alang" is quite apt in describing the sound that sifted in through the moonbeams on several nights last week when great armies of our feathered friends were passing over this Cane River country. I can't recall if it is their custom to travel by moonlight exclusively or not. I must leave one ear functioning this week just to see if additional companies of them honk out their an-revoirs in the dark, or if they wait until daylight to travel, should the moon remain down.

Three great "V"s passed over the other morning about an hour after daylight, flying so low that one could see them easily enough. I must find out where their hopping places are located and if they journey from point to point as regularly scheduled stopping places, or if the circumstances of weather and moonlight alter their places for pausing, - or if it is merely a hit and miss affair, which I doubt.

I know not the average mileage for their scheduled flights, but assume them to be perhaps several hundred miles. The humming birds, of course, on heading South from the Louisiana Gulf shore, must of necessity, make a 600 mile hop without resting. But how the geese do, I have no idea. I have an idea they might list Arkansas as one of their feeding and resting places, prior to their jaunt over the Gulf to Columbia and Venezuela, but I am in total ignorance of precise details. Of one thing I am certain, I am delighted they fly over Cane River on their migrations North and South, for it will always be pleasant on the terrace at Arentbourg to hear them honking in the twilight and the dawn.

1448

Dora's observations on what happened in Fort Worth is quite interesting. I reckon the congealing of racial consciousness in that quarter must have intensified because of the latest doings in the Washington doings not long ago.

I have written Dora, suggesting that through Miss Ramsey's friend on the Fort Worth paper, we might find another agency in that town to sponsor a show, and if so, it might offer the reporter on the local paper to do quite a round about the reactionary attitude of local stuffed shirts, regardless of the kloppling the Wahsington D. A. R.s got in consequence of their second go-round at stupidity.

I learn from the Madam that la Grignan has forwarded you some pecanese. Where that one will bust out next, no one can guess. Today she and her husband are in Shreveport, signing papers to purchase a residence in that place. 45 days, it is said, will see them take over the property, for which they are paying \$18,000.00, it is said. And so, I guess, by the middle of December, we should have seen the last of them, save on rarer visits, what with their new location some hundred miles from here. It certainly will be nice if they eventually discover that China has need of their services.

It is pleasant to report that the Madam continues in quite a pleasant frame of mind and that she gets down stairs at least once a day. She continues to manifest general interest in my plans for planting, etc., at Arenbourg, when that comes to hand, and while she will scarcely be able to ever get there, save for a single visit, perhaps, in a car, to give it a once over, still it is pleasant to know that she gets so much pleasure out of thinking about it. I am frankly amazed that la Grignan never has heard about the place, - and now that she is moving away, it will evaporate completely from her sphere of interest.

My agents report that the owner of the billiard table is looking with favor upon the transfer of that item to me, although inquiry as to its final disposition has to be made from its owner, the mulatto Dupree, currently in California. I can wait, but it will be nice to have it rounded up.

Grandpere's granddaughter, Flavite, who attends the priests as housekeeper, has been approached as to what final disposition she will make of her portrait of her kinsman, Francois Cassion Metoyer, which would eventually look ever so nice at Arenbourg. As I understand it, the ex-President of Duquesne is also casting eyes of yearning in the same direction as I am, - but I know not with how much enthusiasm. I shall continue to push my case gently, and there is always a possibility that my opponent will have disassociated himself from Cane River before final disposition is made, in which case my chances would be the better for adding this item to our collection.

Must skip for now.....

1449

October 31st, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Twenty five times a million wouldn't half express ~~the~~ figure which I would need to express my appreciation for all the nice things that came to hand in today's report.

Of all, there were so many points, - I know not where to begin, but I shall just remark that Arenbourg was a little closer because of it all and another section of tin roof and another line of fence is the more sturdy, and as the final bales of cotton roll out, I find myself rolling up my sleeves the higher, digging a little deeper around certain gardenias and sweet olives, designed for transplanting, and Tomorrow seems the happier because of another paving block thus added to the grand highway leading to home.

And next I shall speak of the pleasure I have in picturing your new decors, and it all sounds so delightful and I know the library, living room and bedroom are going to make up a perfectly delicious ensemble, and as I reach out my hand to adjust my radio, I shall be thinking of another engaged in the same enterprise. It's all pretty nice.

And thanks for telling me of Ego and all. I am glad you feel as I do about the trust in which one may repose to his wisdom and good will. At the same moment, however, I hasten to suggest that the stalling off of Nadine, it would seem to me, would be most advisable I was surprised and disappointed a few years ago when she went haywire and wrote a letter denouncing those who were happier than she was at the time, and surely she must have been sorely tried. Perhaps it was merely a case of nerves, perhaps it was the natural reaction to a pent up resentment of those who somehow contrived to find some happiness, in spite of so many things stacked against them at the time. Whatever it was, the letter did her no credit, while it harmed no one. Perhaps a week later, from an envelope, cancelled in Los Angeles, came a sheet of paper bearing nothing more than a poem, it seems to me, by Louis Untermyer, saying something about "you can keep your proud azalias, you of the South, I shall always treasure my noble Northern pines", - or some such, and the envelope was addressed to the Madam. I feel certain

1450

the letter, - or rather the poem, was typed by Nadine, forwarded to California for mailing, as a kind of vague but final expression of resentment against a lady whom she felt loved her less than her friend with whom she used to share her letters.

For my final shot, I dropped her a letter, saying how much I had always admired her superb control in times gone by when things had tried her and everyone so mightily, and that on that key, - and with that thought in mind, since this was my final letter, I would always remember her. My idea was both to pour oil and troubled waters, sooth a troubled soul and at the same time terminate further correspondence with this address. I gather my intention worked, since never have we heard since, and that was years ago. Just because a horse runs away once, is no sign that he will always be running away. But somehow just one run, sometimes, makes me tend to select another animal, if given a choice. And I mention all this to you, just in case contact should be re-established, for it seems to me only fair that you should be fore-armed.

Curiously enough, Nadine has a precise double, both in personality, refinement, self control to a certain point, and of all things, the same weakness. She is a niece of Miss Nellie Ragan, the Miss Nellie who used to teach the Henry boys when they were small children. Miss Nellie has a sister, Annie Gibson of whom I have spoken before, and Kate somebody is another sister. The young woman I have in mind is Miss Kate's daughter, and has passed by here a couple of times. She is really wonderful as a personality, but somehow, not so much through malice as through some pent up feeling of unhappiness about something or other, she invariably slips off the deep end unless one watches her carefully and keeps her from getting too close to that most lamentable of situations, - self pity. It is curious that the parallel should be so identical in all respects.

And speaking of former associates, what in the world ever happened to Plumette? She wrote me one or twice after I came here, but her writing was so crumbly that I had difficulty in finding anyone to translate it, and being thus delayed in learning its contents, I was slow in making my response which worried her, - worried in the sense the darkies here use the word, meaning vaguely annoyed, - and I never did hear from her again. I suppose my final note from her was in December of 1939.

And speaking of Plumette recalls her tumor operation, and that reminds me that J. H. told me yesterday that Stephen has been operated on in Walter Reid Hospital, - some kind of an intestinal obstruction, I think. I shall hear further when J. H. talks with Washington this morning.

1451

Once, on the west side of Mobile Bay, Alabama, I saw a wonderful searchlight display. We were stopping at a place in the country, giving directly on the Bay. Somewhere a mile or two off beyond the placid surface of the water lay a promontory, behind which a number of battleships must have been lying at anchor. The night was moonless but pin-pointed with a million stars. Never did we actually see the actual glare of the searchlights, - only the great fingers of light, playing magnificent patterns across the sky, and reversing themselves in duplicate on the blue black surface of Mobile Bay. We had traveled far that day, - from Tallahassee, Florida, and physically we were tired, but the panorama of deep gray blue sky and the pleasantly mellowed gold of the shimmering waters where the beams of the hidden searchlights play in reflection produced an effect that made one, in spite of tiredness, want to remain wakeful so long as the splendid show lasted.

Our Indian Summer remains astonishingly mild and warm, with the thermometer hovering around the 80's during most of the day. The haze, so characteristic of this season, gradually thickens into thin layers of clouds, through which the sun filters as through gauze. Almost any day now, the thermometer will drop, the clouds thicken and the drizzles begin. That will probably signal the opening of the pasture gates, and cattle will then rummage about in the cotton fields, getting fat on cotton seed, still plentiful enough in the unpicked acres of cotton. That will mean the end of this season's crop, and then we shall begin giving attention to Arentbourg in action rather than thought. Already the narcissus are a foot high, and by this week end, I assume, the earlier varieties will begin to bloom. This year I shall pay particular attention to where the different varieties grow, marking them for transplanting next June. There are quite a few bulbs that have survived the years, - and the cows, - at Arentbourg, but these will be supplemented by additional ones that have flourished for generations both at Melrose and Mme. Aubin-Rocques. I especially want a flock of golden daffodils from here, - accumulations from other old gardens about, and I shall also give an eye to the old fashioned hyacinthes which will bloom in February and will be transplanted a couple of months later.

All this talk of little details makes it sound as though there would really be quite a display at Arentbourg, which will not be so, and yet they, - the hyacinthes and the narcissus and the daffodils will be sufficient to a ford much color and perfume in some happy winter to come, and the joy of transplanting them will be based on that joy of sharing their glories in time to come.Again a million thanks for everything that goes so far along the road toward Arentbourg...

1452

While I think of it, I shall refer to the enclosed letter from little Miss Alberta. It has no news of interest, but as I understand it, the spelling is so ething of a revelation (revelation), since it seems to come up almost to my standard, which is going some. The Madam thought she was enclosing this letter to her daughter, but I know she sent some advertisement instead, and so I send this along to you. I don't want it back.

Miss Alberta never likes to spend more than a day or two in Dayton, Cincinnati or West Milton, for she declares the former acquaintances there, - and her relatives, are always referring to things that transpired in childhood, and being thus reminded of her youth, it always tears her to pieces, since she doesn't ever want to think about her age. I suppose this is some off-shoot of her Mary Baker Eddy-ism. Certainly, any way you slice it, little Miss Alberta is a riot.

I intended asking a day or two ago if your journeys into Fourth Avenue had been crowned with any success in the literary department. I recall you mentioned having run across a St. Amand volume on the Valois Court. This is not pushing you to search for other volumes, for they will be run across from time to time, but I inquire as to success up to now as I am under the impression you intended to speak further on a find or two, but were perhaps interrupted when speaking of them.

I was delighted with your account of your trip along the Hudson for a glimpse at the current naval parade. It must have been a thrilling sight, and well worth the effort of arising early and making such a "round about" journey to the office. I hadn't heard an reference to the arrangement of the 21 gun salutes, so fixed as to keep up a continuous two hour din. I did hear some reference to the searchlight display which must have been quite magnificent, too, and it took me back to an article I read in an ante tellum Natchez paper of gigantic fireworks that were once arranged on the Louisiana side of the river, opposite Natchez, where from the bluffs one could view them to the greatest advantage. In reading that article, it struck me that had the place for the display and the crowd's position been reversed, the effect would have been even more striking, - the spectators on the low Louisiana shore with the "feu d'artifice" set up on the 300 foot crest of the bluff, so that the stationary pieces would seem rather taller and the height to which the rockets sailed to be endless.

1453

November 1st, 1945.
Memorandum to Clipping Service:
Only time for a brief note this morning, for schoolmaster and correspondence on the behalf of half a dozen friends has somehow eaten up all the time.

I must congratulate you on your keen observation in regard to the use of another typewriter from my customary one. No, Nothing more than a frayed ribbon impelled me to make use of the present machine. What with so much going on in the cotton gin and the store during these busy days, I have been unable to get either Bill Hinton from the store or Mr. Brew from the gin to put on a new ribbon for me, and so I just lifted the machine from the library of the big house and brought it over here until the rains should bring leisure and an opportunity to put my other machine in order again. What bright eyes you have.

The copy of the Kane opus, covered by last summer's check, arrived yesterday, with a very nice dedication. But it is late in arriving, and the nice dedication scarcely ruts out the raw hide whip in chapter 16. So be it.

The Madam had a letter from Lyle yesterday on the subject of Plantation Parade. I think he was under the impression the Madam wanted him to denounce the author, and his note was on the soft peddle side. Perhaps the truest line was that one certainly doesn't expect a guest, spoken to in confidence, to publicize such conversations. Lyle asked for a letter from me as to my impressions. I have written one, - contrived in such a manner that it may well be read by Mr. Kane, as well it may be, in the event I actually send the letter, - which I may or may not do. In my letter, I questioned the fairness of anyone in permitting a single word to wreck a whole paragraph or a chapter, but that for myself, I felt that raw hide had done precisely that, so far as my reaction to the book was concerned.

Yesterday afternoon I got a truck and drove up to Madame Aubin-Rocques house, intent on getting the armoire, etc., but as the house was surrounded by a cotton field, - the the West of the corn field, and the field filled with cotton pickers, kin to the departed lady, I let the whole thing go, in order to spare them the sorrow of seeing the dispersal of their kin folk's effects. Isn't it curious that the house has stood empty for over two years, and no one has even bothered to want any of the effects remaining therein. This is because her things were old fashioned, I suppose, and whatever the family, - grandchildren, - wanted has been removed, - iron beds, etc., for her offspring would not want any of the old fashioned pieces, like the armoire, made by slave labor long before the Civil War.

I shall wait until a little rain has so damped the cotton field that pickers will not be present, and then I shall go on the same mission a second time. There are some fine old bits of hardware in the house, - long hinges, for example, all made by the strong hand of some forgotten slave blacksmith, - and black, I am sure, he was. Most of these fine old examples of local craftsmanship are on doors and batten blinds, on the outside of the house, and these I shall not disturb, as those blinds and doors are a protection against the weather. But I am sure the house is headed toward collapse, and there is only the vaguest chance that anyone will ever save it from destruction. So far as any such examples of handicraft within the house is concerned, however, I shall have no qualms about saving them, for they are not needed to keep the elements out, and in the case the house should be propped up and turned over to tenants, they will certainly not miss, - or even care, for those rare objects that have been preserved for Azenhourg.

It's late, late, and I must gallop. On the morrow, I think, I shall be able to start a little earlier.....

Memorandum to Clipping Service: on of qu tuc, spring, 1971

Your elegant report of Monday to hand, and I loved every word of it.

It will be good news to have a report on Wednesday's dinner and how things played out in that long delayed reunion

On Wednesday night I fiddled around in the air waves, searching for our friend Genet, but couldn't locate her. If she appears on WJ4 in New York, she should come in through WDSU in New Orleans, but try as I might, I never could track her down. This coming Wednesday I shall try again. But I did stumble over Mrs. Ogden Reid's program, getting Messrs. Schellentack, Byrnes, Cord Mayer and some eminent scientist, so I felt the substitute for Genet was fair.

And during those listening hours on my part, there was much conversation going on in your midst, and I shall be so eager to hear all

I thought you very noble, what with such a busy program last Saturday, to take in the fleet, too, but I am glad you made it, in spite of the high wind and all, for it must have been a wonderful sight, and I am glad the weather, aside from the breeze, favored the outing. To me, there is always something thrilling and mysterious in such an array, - so much power concentrated in such duck like contraptions, and there is always the element of strangeness in them, especially as one sees first one and then another, slide up the river or down, jockeying here and there for one position or another, - and all according to some plan, dictated from out of the ether and accomplished in spite of their individual bulk, with so much precision and dispatch.

One of the first reviews of "Plantation Parade" came to hand yesterday. - I think it was from a Shreveport paper. We started reading it and had reached a spot wherein reference was made to Mrs. Cammie G. Henry of Melrose, when someone blew in, and after a return to normalcy, we never could find the review again. I assume additional reports will come to hand shortly.

1456

I was so glad you mentioned the Drew Pierson broadcast in reference to Stephen. J. H. said he heard it and added that "that man sure took Stephen apart, Mother". It is curious that at about the time the broadcast was being made, declaring that Stephen was resigning, and not for reasons of health, that Stephen was actually under the knife for quite a serious operation, - something about the intestines, but I am not certain just what. J. H. talks with Mrs. Stephen Henry every day and so keep abreast with things, but up to now, nothing has been said about any resignation.

Without knowing anything about the business, I assume that Pierson may feel that the public generally would like to have somebody skinned alive for a scapegoat in the matter of returning veterans. I believe that job was Stephen's, and as near as I can make out, he has dissolved the Army about as rapidly as possible, although in reality, I know nothing about it. I have felt right along, however, that the mania for getting people out of the Army has approached an alarming stage, and I notice so many ordinary news casters, like the Columbia World Today 15 minute programs, seem to always be injecting a frantic note about hurrying the United States out of its uniform. This has seemed not unfortunate to me, since it is likely to give other countries the impression, - and to germinate such a thought at home, - that the U. S. is not going to assume its international obligations in keeping order maintained in troubled spots, - I should say order maintained. I think it is good that any nation does not like to wear uniforms, but I think it dreadful if our police forces should all break their necks rushing out of uniforms just because one or two Al Capones had been put out of the way, for the assumption that with the passing of a couple of highly publicized figures scarcely gives one, - and especially the uniformed, - the right to declare to the world that we no longer shall have any need of protective forces.

Perhaps Pierson was appealing for popularity by giving sob-sister stuff to a flock of discontented ladies whose one and sole desire is to get back their soldiers within a twinkling of an eye, regardless of the greater needs for world security being considered.

In all this discussion, I am holding no brief for Stephen, for I have no means of knowing if he has done a good job or a poor one. I suppose his job has been merely that of effecting the orders formulated by the General Staff of which he is a member. That job may or may not have been done well. But I am sure that I am all opposed to those who keep stirring up hysterics about rushing the Army in to civilian life at such headlong speed that the preponderance of American influence for peace is jeopardized and the seeds of new commotions can be planted before the present excitement is well finished.

1457

And Stephen, thank the Lord, is in the hospital, for he needs to be there, while Dan, unfortunately, is also in the hospital, but scarcely needs to be, save that his elbow must be thoroughly gone over every few days.

At the moment, J. H., I think, is far from well, and is all likely to be less so shortly. Like Stephen, he also had some kind of an operation years ago which has never quite returned him to physical perfection. I believe there are adhesions, and I know he now suffers considerably, with a bulge as big as a baseball protruding from his side. I suppose the bulge to be a portion of the intestines which have broken through the usual wall of muscle and skin holding them in place.

I am going to offer him a little free advice this morning, as to having something done about his situation, but it will be like singing psalms to a dead mule, for the Henrys are all geared high, and they will continue to go full tilt until they fall out, - only it would be a great pity for J. H. to throw away his life so needlessly. He has told no one of his present situation, but I have learned it from this circumstance and that, and I shall stick out my neck regardless.

Yesterday I learned that the Peter Metpyers should have their crop picked during the coming week, - "should the weather hold". I am sure the weather will not, since it is much too warm, - yesterday in the 90's, and somewhat heavy clouds around the horizon somehow hold off from day to day, but never fail to remind one that the rains of November cannot be far off. But it is good to know that the cotton is almost all harvested, so that even though endless rains descend and the fows get what is left of the cotton, the loss will not be great and the move of the family cannot be long delayed.

You are forever flooring me with unexpected bits of historical information, and the latest is your inquiry regarding General Banks passing along the terrace at Arentburg in April of 1864. I believe that date to be the correct one, and eventually we shall have to arrange a pageant in April or each succeeding year to commemorate his passing by our place. There is an old jingle about the civil war, wherein the different events, or possible the different years, are set down in some sort of rhyme, and I can't recall any of it save this line:

"In 18 hundred and sity four, the Yankees skiddaddled
And their retreat from above Hatchitoches, as you know, followed
along the full length of Cane River and thence downed River
to Alexandria."

1458

On Sunday comes Andre Maurois and others discussing Zola's *Germinal*. What might be quite interesting, and the following week is going to be some American thing, which I have forgotten.

In response to my letter of two or three weeks back to the invitation to learning program, asking about the availability of scripts, etc., I have had no response, although it would seem as though sufficient time had elapsed, were I to receive one.

I seem to have mislaid a nice letter from Madam Roosevelt which came to hand a day or two ago, in response to my recent letter to her. She says she hasn't Louisiana on her list at the moment, but that she would like to retain the invitation to Melrose with a view to making the most of it, should she get down this way before too long. I certainly hope the chapter in Plantation Parade doesn't frighten her off.

P. S.

I feel I should make further reference to Nadine.

At the time she cut herself off from Melrose, you will recall that she automatically cut off communication as between you and me.

I might recall that quite a time elapsed before I could write directly to you, being without address.

Learning eventually, with the new address, permitting us to resume contact, I also learned that she had apparently cut herself off from you, too. I refer to the time when she was in the line at the box office at the Metropolitan and did not recognize you.

Assuming that the contact was finished but completely, I saw no reason for passing along the particulars regarding her somewhat unfortunate letter, - a letter, I should add, of which the Madam never understood at all, and which passed into oblivion in her mind, thanks to a soft peddling official on my part. With time having elapsed and poor Nadine having come back into balance, I am sure her integrity is above reproach, and yet I felt it only fair to acquaint you with the fact that once the horse had run away, - without actually upsetting anything, - for under similar circumstances, I, too, would like to know about such a circumstance, so that I might be guided accordingly.

1459

Memorandum to Clipping Service: November 3rd, 1945.

I liked this one. Yesterday I stopped at the garage and the gin, while stretching my legs between prolonged sittings at this machine. At the garage, - pronounced "Gourage" in this area, I saw "Phonsie". He told me that he had just finished his cotton picking. I congratulated him and asked him about the progress his neighbors, - Alfred Llorenz, Airey Balthazar, Peter Metoer, Jean Roque, etc., - Peter thrown in quite casually, of course, - and he reported that most of them still had another week or two to concentrate on their crops.

And then he said he wanted to ask me something, - what did I know about dreams? - I felt something coming, and so I said that I had studied about them a little, and what did he have in mind.

"Well," he said, "I just dreamed the other night, and I saw you and you was living next door to me, and I thought you had become my neighbor. And what I want to know is, do you believe in such things?"

So somebody has been talking, and I am hoping that Peter, living next door, hasn't heard the same talk, - for I had the same "dreams", but I presume he has. And so I thought I wouldn't lend any confirmation to such unstable gyrations of the mind, and so I went into a big discussion of how the mind sometimes remains active, even after the body seems to have relaxed into sleep, etc., etc., and so I left "Phonsie" without every appearing to recognize his roundabout inquiry regarding my intentions.

Yesterday we were blessed by having no visitors, and in consequence, the Madam got around to read some of the nice things you had recently sent, - pages from the Herald-Tribune, etc. She marked a number of things that interested me much, including the racket your friend, Clare Booth Luce (Luce) started in the Putnam Hills Chapter of the D. A. R. over a protest to be filed with the National Board about the Hazel Scott business. I was particularly interested in what

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the Old Guard pillars of entrenched wealth had to say in attempting to crawl out from under their latest blunder, in denying the use of the hall in Washington for the concert. I thought the job of reporting to be excellent, - and the excuses the tags offered were so typical and so inept.

J. H. talked with Colonel Dow, Stephen's aid, in Washington yesterday, and he reports Stephens' recovery to be excellent. In spite of Mr. Pierson's prediction, no one seems to know anything about a contemplated resignation, and I assume that if the progress of the patient continues along present lines, he will shortly be taking off for Florida for recuperation and thence possibly back to Washington, via Melrose. I am hoping that may be the plan, since I should ever so much like to talk with him on a hundred subjects, not the least of which would include his personal impression of his present Commander in Chief. If I remember correctly, Stephen gave a dinner party for Mr. and Mrs. Truman sometime in the late Winter or early Spring, sometime after Stephen had spent a little time in Hot Springs with his former Commander in Chief. It will be interesting to learn of Stephen's impression of the new one, and the most striking contrasts he has in mind, as between the one and the other.

More and more it looks to me as though Mr. Truman finds himself on an enormous machine which he feels will rock along alright without a yone doing much guiding. So clever was the former occupant of that seat, that the machine did almost seem to travel on its own momentum, although, in view of the new driver's ineptitudes, it is becoming clearer and clearer that the former driver was a much greater artist than a lot of people guessed or wanted to admit. It is surely a great pity that the enormous amount of positive good that could be done by a more capable person is being squandered by one whom God never intended for such a great responsibility. Easily the greatest power on earth, we appear to be fumbling, and in so doing, we are letting wonderful opportunities for establishing vast powers for world betterment slip by and fritter themselves away into nothingness. I do think the little man who now finds himself in the driver's seat is doing the best he can, but I'm afraid it is all beyond him.

A line from Miss Robina reports the Dormons as heading toward Shreveport this week end. How those gals do get around, - in spite of the mules. That was the only letter we had from the outside world, and keeping pretty well glued to my chair yesterday, I am bereft of any news worth relaying. Shall do better on the morrow.

1461

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Off hand, I would say, that what Columbia needs is an Invitation to Speaking and Courtesy. I am referring, of course, to the Zola discussion on Invitation to Learning, wherein I never heard so much stuttering at one sitting, and where one James Ferrell, who seemed to have the least to say, insisted on drowning out Mr. Maurois, who probably had a lot of interesting things to point out, if given a chance and been freed from constant interruptions.

The line I liked best was: "Zola was a moment in the conscious of Man" - a line from Anatole France, which seems pretty good to me.

At the close of the program, I was impressed by the thought, or rather the announcement that Zola's *Germinal* was available on Talking Records for the use of the Blind. If anyone wanted to read the book, - and had a Talking Machine, - that certainly would be nice.

But for myself, I lack to requisites: - a Talking Machine on the one hand, and any desire to read Zola on the other.

I am grateful to God that Zola lived and by his writings, quickened the world's interest in the need for a fairer distribution of wealth. But just as I whole heartedly admire some great, public spirited engineer, who conceives the necessity for some kind of a sewage system, and beats the drum to bring that about, so do I admire Zola. For while applauding the stout hearted person who recognizes and fights for effective sewage disposal, I personally am interested more in other problems, - not at all more important, perhaps not so worthy, but never the less as pressing, and since I shall never exhaust my interest in those other lines, I shall always have to content myself with admiring and saying Amen to the efforts of those interested in Zola's endeavors, and follow along other parallels that somehow excite my interest in the vast variety of human needs.

A snarled, tangled, knotted ball of twine might well symbolize the life problem of every human being. Some units are coarse, rough jumbles of rope, - the characters in *Germinal*. Of the same nature, or rather the same form, are delicate botins of silken cord, - and those were Prout's characters. The mix-up and confusion of all these varying types of string stem from identical circumstances. I am glad Zola called attention to the rope that needed straightening out. For myself, I prefer to try to straighten out the silken cords, with some one like "little" Marcel as the master "untangler". - And that's that.

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But just to be inconsistent, - or possibly because I think I detect more silk than hemp in the negro tangle, I shall mention an episode, fraught with a lot of mix-up, - that came to the surface on Saturday.

One of the wholesale pecane purchasing houses in Natchitoches bought pecanes from Melrose about noon. Later in the day, the same truck bought a greater quantity of pecanes from a negro, somewhere between here and Bermuda. The negro is one Henry Johnson, whom I don't know. He lives somewhere on Red River, due East from Melrose. Now the pecanes he sold were of the grafted variety, and about the only grafted trees in the section are on Melrose, between Bane and Red River.

The Sheriff and his deputies were advised on the purchase. The truck of pecanes was impounded. At this moment, some of the deputies, I am sure, are learning from Henry Johnson from whence he obtained the pecanes. Some of the deputies, - and especially Mr. Black, - of all names, are hill billies, and this transaction will afford them a lovely opportunity to turn on the heat.

I am not certain, but I think there is a Johnson boy who has recently returned from the wars where he fought with distinction. What methods the deputies will use on him and what his reaction will be, excites my curiosity.

What with all the costs involved in raising pecanes, - their planting, the years of taxes on the property, their cultivation, their spraying, etc., etc., scarcely enables one to sit by and permit the yearly crop to be stolen.

And yet, the very agency of restraint is of such a nature that one almost shudders when one thinks of what those suspected may have to go through at the hands of the deputies.

It is perhaps uninteresting, this beginning of a tale, of which I know no more. And yet with the upheaval of human relations is so disturbing that I take the liberty to waste your time with this mere statement of what little I know, - and I shall add to the tale from time to time, if I learn more, - and if I don't learn more, I shall find myself wondering what kind of human injustices the deputies practised on those suspected of lifting the pecanes.

On the purely personal front, I confess I am keeping an eye still open for "Colis" No. 3, which should have arrived Friday or Saturday, under normal conditions, but the postman told me on Saturday that the trains were late, due to heavy week end travel and no second class mail or parcel post came through, so I reckon I'll be starting off Monday with a surprise package. More on that point shortly, and in the mean time, I'll be thinking of a lot of things we shall eventually discuss on the terrace of Arenbourg.....

1463

Memorandum to Clipping Service: November 6th, 1945.
On general principles, I am opposed to sharing one lady's correspondence with another, but under the circumstances, I feel you and I would do well to be acquainted with the contents of both enclosures, - the one that came to me, and a copy of my response.

Whenever I think of her, I instinctively find myself saying "Poor child", and excusing her one time flight into poorer judgement because of her youth and whatever pressure was exerted on her from home. I took her suggestion as to addressing her at her office, and I think things may ride perhaps the more easily for her if the home influence, since that will be ignorant of the correspondence, will exert no influence at all.

True friends are so rare and even good friends develop so infrequently, that I am glad she is blessed with the contact she will have with old friends in her own neighborhood, which, I feel sure, meant much more to her than she realized when she withdrew from the scene. And if contact by mail means something to her, I shall be delighted to do my part. After all, I can't see that her life from here on out can be too bright. If eventually, she should hear from Rolf, what then? And sometimes, when I think of the difficulties awaiting anyone who might try to establish a home in Europe for the next generation, I think that were Death to solve the problem, it might, in the long run, be the kinder fate.

But every life can take such unexpected turns toward happiness, once one gets in the proper groove, that I think we would all be doing well to hope for her happiness, for certainly she has much goodliness and kindness, and regardless of the size of the vessel, it seems to be filled to capacity.

I trust you may find some use for the stamps, which I take the liberty to enclose herewith. Frankly, I have as much use for them as old Grandpa has for a pocketbook, but it seemed to me the better thing to do was to accept them, for I feel she sent them as a kind of visible wish that her correspondence might be forth coming, and by returning them, I might give the impression that I did not really appreciate your motive, which, I am sure, was one of generosity and good will.

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Just one more point in reference to this subject:-
I am wondering if she saved the letters I used to write, -
none of which, as I recall, were in reality written with her
in mind. When I lost a vast section of my Journal in the
April floods, I presume I lost a lot of details, - none of them
of much importance, that approximated those years when I was writing
those letters that went to her. What do you think? - would it
it be wiser for you to mention them casually in conversation some-
time, or would it be better for me to ask if they were preserved?
I guess I would never have any use for them, but I can't imagine
them of being of any particular interest to her, and I guess it
I would be just as well if they were disposed of, although I am not
particularly interested in them either way.

And now, after all this, may I tell you that "Colis dund"
Trianon, No. 3" arrived in perfect order, and that its contents
tents will delight the heart of more than one soul and lend
warmth to more than one body. The "bright shawl" is a most red no
knockout which I gazed at with much eyes of yearning. The red
gentlemen's clothing will serve to most excellent purpose, and their
arrival is so opportune. I know the lady's garment, - the long one
is going to delight some feminine heart and the little skirt and
tacket is a honey, so to speak. I haven't taken time out to
think which person will get which, but I shall do so shortly, and
report accordingly. It makes me so happy to think how happy you must
feel to have guaranteed so much happiness to so many.

One word regarding the Arenbourg residents, and then I must
stop, confining this report to a single page. - In con-
fidence today Bill Lorenz, our neighbor to the North, tells me
that Peter Metoyer, his wife and their two daughters plan to
move to Natchitoches or Alexandria as soon as their cotton crop is
gathered, and that their sons, T. J. Wilson and Peter, Jr., and the
youth in the snapshot along with his horse, will probably go to
Alexandria, too. Accordingly, it shouldn't be long now, but
I am rather sorry they are leaving, for this voluntary move on their
part, along with perhaps a dozen or more other old inhabitants of
Cane River will take them to city life which they will, for the
most part, not like, and now that unskilled labor is on the down
grade, their lot isn't going to be easy. Most of them, of course,
will return, as they always do, and perhaps the interlude will
have provided a frolic for them and greater contentment when, on re-
turning, they re-discover some of the joys of their pastoral life
they never dreamed of until they exchanged it for urban existence.

On the pecane front, I learn that 8 different people have I
been named in that extra-legal transaction, but I have not as yet
yet learned the identity of any of them, and in consequence I
shiver a little, hoping against hope that not too many of my
friends will be named. I don't have many friends on Little River,
but those I do have I cherish.....

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Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The enclosures are of no especial interest, but I thought
you would be interested to learn that the Invitation to Learning
did finally come through with an acknowledgement, and that
you would enjoy Miss Rotina's sarcasm on the Dormon doings.

I had rather expected a note from Dora in today's post,
for it seems like quite a while since last a line came through.
But not only did nothing arrive from Norman, but nothing arrived
from any place, save a copy of The New York Times, which never fails.
By the way, have you any idea to whom we might be indebted for the
daily Times. No one here seems to remember ever having ordered
it, but it has been coming regularly for some months, - since
September, I think.

The pecane story is beginning to unfold, and while I am
still in the dark, I shall pass along the bits of news as they
come to hand, without waiting to await a clear picture before
passing it along.

It seems that the deputies had a busy day yesterday, -
rather, Monday, and the up-shot of the pressure was that not
Henry Johnston was the man who had sold the pecanes to the dealer,
but Nathaniel Wade, who lives on Little River. He named five men
living on Melrose from whom he had purchased the grafted pecanes,
and the six men were taken to jail this morning. I can't recall
all of them, but some of their names are Windey Curry, Aymon Anthony,
Louve Williams and the others elude my memory at the moment.

J. H. told their families that they might provide bail for
them immediately, if they cared to, but that their release from
jail would be of short duration, since all six of the men, and
possibly some more, would most certainly be harvesting sugar cane
shortly. That expression stems from the fact that the State's
Prison is at Angola, on the East bank of the Mississippi, in
West Feliciana, near the Mississippi State line. From the present
outlook, it would seem as though all of those taken to jail
today would have a speedy trial and be convicted, with each re-
ceiving terms of from 5 to 6 years.

The sentence seems severe. Up to the moment, I have no
friends in the group, although Rodney Payne, whom I forgot to in-
clude in the group, has sometimes cut my hair for me when Jack
Nelwon has been lost in the road in his fine car.

There are bound to be further repercussions, and I shall send

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them along as they come to hand.

Just as I was starting to the store this morning, along about nine o'clock, a messenger brought me word that there were pilgrims. They turned out to be two very delightful ladies, - a Miss Blythe of St. Louis, and a Mrs. Robinson of New Orleans, - the latter an old friend of Lyle's and a perfectly delightful lady who had been here years before with Gwen Bristoe(w?).

I did 't learn much by way of news from them, but I do think I did gather that Weeks Hall of Shadows on the Teche, isn't at all pleased with what is written about him or his place in Plantation Parade. That lines up another along with Parlange and Melrose.

It seems that Weeks Hall's very ancient aunt, - in her 90's, has at long last departed this life. I think her fortune was estimated at about three million and Weeks was her sole heir. I think I mentioned that Weeks would probably find himself very busy these days in the usual business of settling such an estate, but Mrs. Robinson said that to everyone's surprise, it appeared, on investigation, that her fortune had dwindled somehow and some-where, but as yet no details were available.

Of other news, I have but scant. I did hear on Sunday that Sister had sent you some pecanecakes. She may have or she may have not, knowing Sister as I do. Her husband, with very good reason, I suspect, has closed up his Natchitoches office. That venture wasn't of long duration, but it was certainly not too dull while it lasted. I never have believed that Sister ever learned of the attack on the Naval official's wife.

Of yes, there was another thing, from Mrs. Robinson: she saw Jack and Lois Lester of Waverly the other day, and Mr. Lester's present situation remains very uncertain. She also said that the old Hermitage Plantation home, near Donaldsonville, is being restored. That was a lovely place, and is described in Seibold's book, - that two volume item, of which I have spoken to you before. After careful examination, I think it is one of the finest books on Louisiana Plantations that I know. It was privately printed at \$10.00, but should or might be available for much less at the present time. It does have mistakes, but it also has a wealth of rare pictures, many of long departed houses, and its text is filled with quotations from old manuscripts, etc. I think it is about the most comprehensive of any book I know on Louisiana.

Must gallop for the moment. More anon.....

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November 7th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It's late, and I'm a little tired, and under ordinary circumstances I would be writing you on Thursday morning, the 8th. But what with Brother coming for his schooling early in the morning, and Mr. Bachelier here, and likely to targe in even earlier, with Dr. Knipmayer coming a little later, and Celeste having already sent me word that she has tonight returned from South Louisiana and wishes to see me early, - I reckon I shall enjoy a little chat with you tonight before folding up my long beard.

First off, let me say how much I have appreciated your nice long Saturday letter, which came in this morning's post. Between licks this afternoon, Mr. Brew and I established contacts, and while I did not complete the last page and the enclosure, I have read the major portion of your letter, and I am ever so much indebted to you for the delicious exchange of views and the purveyance of news.

I think my original letter to you on the subject of Nadine was expressed in a fashion that might have been improved upon. In subsequent communications, I hope I have stated my reaction a little more clearly. Frankly I think the poor girl must have been confused by two or three very distrusting elements at the time she broke off, a couple of years ago, or was it three. I think there was nothing sinister in what she did, - perhaps more like a child, - which she was, - who sometimes over talks when guests are about.

Now that she has evinced sufficient wisdom to keep her correspondence to herself, - even as have I, - I have a feeling things from here on out will run along ever so smoothly, and never again will she succumb to a state of nerves, - especially as the correspondence between her and me will be direct and at neither receiving end will there be a second party.

Surely, I need scarcely point out the reason for my rather brisk correspondence with her three years ago. I think even to her it must have been almost apparant that as soon as I had jotted down the salutation, the entire balance of the letter was written with one mental image before me, and the image was not Nadine's, even though it was only through her at that time that contact, thus indirect, could be maintained with one who meant so much to me.

1468

She is a sweet child, and fate has dealt her out a dreadful hand in every hand t us far played. I naturally feel sorry for her, but obviously, there is not much reason for any rapid fire correspondence with her, and while I shall continue to toss off a letter from time to time, they will be pretty much of the "you write me and then I'll write you" variety.

I doubt if I am much more superstitious than the average person, and yet I somehow have a sensation that it will serve on in (one) in good stead to maintain some kind of a pleasant personal relation with her, even though contacts may not be quite so frequent as formerly.

There are millions of people in the world who really don't matter at all, and then there are a few hundred who just miss by a hair's breadth, being remarkably good. I might add that if we are in luck, we shall find one or two who approach perfection. Now Nadine is x in the few hundreds group, and too good, I think, and somehow I feel, too surely designed to play some sort of a role eventually, although at the moment I cannot imagine what, that I think she should be cultivated.

As for what you had to tell her in regard to how things turn at this bend of Cane River, I am delighted that you did. I have a feeling that from here on out she is going to be more and more whole-heartedly interested in those of her old associates whom the test of years have proven to be about as solid and as genuine, as she is likely to run across.

I don't think you will find any especial logic in her present attitude. Three years ago she was so tangled up in nerves and "growing pains" that she scarcely knew where she was at. She might well have fallen into that horrible situation of pitying herself, and there is no explanation of anything at such times. But I think she has bridged that gulf, and I am under the impression that she will really gain much in the things life has denied her during these last difficult years, through her association, - directly with you and through laggardly correspondence with me. She is too good to cast off into a barren waste which I suspect most of her existence is, and bleak indeed, so far as hopes of the future go. And so I repeat that I am glad that you confided in her. I am quite persuaded that she can keep secrets and that just having a chance to share some with a heart so big and so grand as yours will help her to a measure of happiness that certainly she has missed much since in some kind of an emotional confusion, she denied herself so foolishly. How often, and in what different roles, you play out your part of Good Samaritan. Somehow that role, whenever played a second or a millionth time, always requires a different setting or a different approach, or a different set of circumstances. Here is a new one for us both to play, - you try personal contact and I try correspondence. The big thing, and I guess the only thing worth while in life is helping someone else get an occasional gleam of sunshine. She is going to need a lot of it. We are going to enjoy it the more in the end because we aren't aren't too madly impelled in picking up the old pattern which another voluntarily, in short-sightedness, cast away.

1469

Lord have mercy, - I never expected to do a whole page on that subject, but in so doing, I am glad to have bored you, if in the end, I expressed myself in a manner that more or less coincides with your own opinion on the matter.

And thanks a million for telling me of Egon and the pleasure you all experienced in hearing his recital. I can almost see him, thanks to your fine account, - his facial expressions, his jaw dropping, his fore arms extended, etc.

His mother's passing was certainly among the more hideous circumstances I have yet heard. If I recall correctly, his Mother's life was never a particularly happy one, and it is a pity its end couldn't have been in peace rather than in halocaust. You will pardon me, - and you will understand, too, if I again repeat, as I have perhaps too often mentioned it before, how glad I am that there were others who were spared all this horrible business, and just as I find myself actually grateful, on seeing the death notice in or on a tombstone in an ante bellum graveyard, reading 1860, how much more so am I grateful to God that the circumstances surrounding one most dear to you were such as they were and that the horrors of war and the rigors of peace are quite powerless to effect one who has gone on to a happier and brighter world.

It was good of you to tell me of the literary treasures, for aside from the Perkins volume, and the St. Amand Valois number, I had not learned of them.

I do not need any of these. I shall be delighted if you will hold all, so that we may eventually ship them direct, when we can enjoy them together in our Library at Arenthourg. I guess you and I are the only ones in the world who would ever relish them with equal fervor. But for that good reason, they will be the more precious on the gallery at Arenthourg in all good time.

I don't recall if it was in The Last Years of Louis XV there appeared the very pleasant account of Mme. de Pompadour's lovely residence of Bellevue, in the St. Germain-en-Laye, St. Glud neighborhood. I think there was quite a good sketch of that delicious chateau in that remarkable book, "Chateaux et Maisons Royales de France", which Tilloah had and which went to some of the Lexington Avenue or some such dealers at the time of the big smash up. That certainly was a marvelous book.

But getting back to St. Amand's last years of Louis XV, I am sure he does something of a round about Louveciennes, the DuBarry established at Marly where I used to go quite often, and that was the house, you will recall, that the Tragonards in the Frick Gallery were painted for originally.

1470

Well, I had better begin to stop of talk ng quite so much, and recognize the approach of the end of this page. Mr. Bachelier came quite unexpectedly today about 11 a.m. Shortly after dinner, Dr. and Mrs. Rand came with Miss D. Randolph, who lives on a Rapides plantation this side of Alexandria, and a Mr. Harrison from Shreveport. I think, and a Mr. and Mrs. Somebody, - who were from Boston. Dr. Rand had a grand time talking with Mr. Bachelier about some famous camellias that grow in a garden near Nantes near Mr. Bachelier's former home, - the lower Loire valley. And Mrs. Rand sat with the Madam, and I did a tour for the visitors, and before we knew it, it was supper time, - and so the day spun out.

But before closing, I must give you another chapter on the pecane business. To paraphrase just a little, it is as ever the case of "Cherchez le blanc".

Mr. Earnest's son-in-law, is a loutish person living in Cloutierville. His name is something like T. Frere De Lauche. Now he rented a piece of land on Little River from Mr. Hymen Cohen, not far from the southern Melrose line. He put a negro on the place, - one Nathaniel Wade, a pretty much no-account fellow. Today I learn, and deduct that the few sacks, - say 4,000 pounds of pecanes, sold to Henry Johnston were nothing, as compared to the huge business in pecane selling Nathaniel Wade has been doing in Cloutierville all during the season.

As soon as Nathaniel Wade went to jail, T. Frere DeLauche immediately tailed him out, and expresses his opposition to doing anything about the folks on Melrose who sold the pecanes to Wade. Of course, if Nathaniel Wade can be kept out of jail, it will be more difficult to convict those who sold their pecanes from Melrose to him, - unless they confess. And so you have the same old, old spectacle of a white trash stirring up the negro, to get him to pull the white scally-wag's chestnuts out of the fire, and the devil help the poor negroes who get caught, and the white man goes free.

J. H., at the moment, is not well, but remains up until the present in quite an adamant state. I could readily set him straight about the Cloutierville leak of pecanes which he doesn't suspect, but the Henrys are not people to whom you can tell thing in confidence, and so I shall have to let him find that out for himself. Curious, curious, curious.

A telephone from Dan Henry says he gets a three day furlough tomorrow, so he will be here tomorrow evening, remaining until Sunday, I believe, when he returns to the hospital. I suppose Mr. Bachelier will remain until Friday, and I am wondering if la belle Essae Mae will come back to Louisiana via Melrose on Saturday, when Mr. Charles is expected from New Orleans. It sounds like a fairly busy week end, doesn't it..... And again my thanks for your grand Saturday letter and my whole hearted approval of your handling of the Nadine business, and together we shall perhaps make her dark days a little lighter. I think it will be an energy, if not a devotion, ever so well invested..

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Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Again, - and contrary to custom, - I pen you these lines at night, what with the fairly full days that begin unrolling before dawn.

At six this morning a couple of friends called at my house that hour, - one for advise on some ~~xxxxi~~ marital difficulty, and the other in regard to making a decision in reference to remaining in the country or going to live in some city, following the harvesting of the cotton crop.

Brother arrived for his lesson a little before 7. The day before I had taught him the first stanza of a Mother Goose rhyme. He told me he had recited it to his papa last night, and papa had never heard it before but he sure did like it, and he learned it, too. I usually urge Brother to tell his papas what he learns at each lesson, so that he will review it for himself without knowing it.

I shall take up your time by indicating the rhyme I thought I had taught him, and what he recited back to me after the 24 hour lapse, and I think there was something to be said for his own rendition:

My version: Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye; Four and twenty blackbirds, baked in a pie. When the pie was opened, the bird began to sing. Wasn't that a dainty dish to set before the King?

And here is Brother's Cane River interpretation:

Sing a son of six pins, a pocket full of rye Four and twenty black birds, baked in a pie. When dat pie was open all dem old birds commenced a-singin'. Now aint dat a dirty dish to set before a King?

So much for Brother, and tomorrow we shall see what he makes out of the second verse along about 7 tomorrow morning.

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As Brother left, - breakfast had come during the lessen, and we had tasted the hot chocolate together, Mr. Bachelier arrived. He told me many interesting things in a rage that covered a whole flock of subjects from the Pyramids to Atomic Energy, - and our sitting was terminated only by the arrival of Sam Peace, who wanted to speak of a new problem that had arisen for him, his niece having just passed away. You may recall her identity for I think I have mentioned her name, Evalina (Toots) Easely.

At the post office, shortly after Sam had left, Bill Hinton told me that Celeste had come home from South Louisiana last night and wished to see me for a moment. I passed by, and found her in good form. In New Iberia, she said, Harnett Kane had given a lecture during the past week, but that she had not attended, having gone to New Orleans that day. The next day she heard the host, - overheard Kane's host, I should have said, remark to his wife that he didn't mind Kane's visit so much but he did think it a little out of line that Kane should have charged his laundry bill to those who entertained him. Lee-ow!

And so to the big house, and a quick run through the mail, with only time to run through the enclosed letter from Miss Rotina. Then Dr. and Mrs. Knipmayer arrived. Dr. Knipmayer spoke off a beautiful old, old rose bush, - a marvelous deep yellow rose, that he had admired a few minutes before arriving here. It is growing in the ancient yard of Agaliza Sarpi, of the distinguished mulatto family by that name. Agaliza, or rather Agalise, is hopelessly stricken with paralysis, but may live for sometime. He says she would be delighted to send us cuttings from the marvelous rose, and so next week I shall be planting cuttings for eventual transplanting at Arentbourg. Don't you think so?

The Knipmayers departing, the dinner bell rang, and the Madam ate upstairs, as she usually does for her noon meal, while Mr. Bachelier, Eugene Latespere and Joe Scruggs and I held down the bachelor's board.

After dinner, we had coffee with the Madam, and then I wanted to skip down to Clemence's with the new supply of paper which arrived in the post from Dora. Mr. Bachelier wanted to walk with me.

I found Clemence as gay as a cricket, and while Mr. Bachelier was looking over pecane trees outside, Clemence showed me a couple of new masterpieces that were results of a recent trip to Natchitoches. She has struck off a couple of somewhat curious items of "The Good Darkie", - that statue in town, which is pretty terrible as a statue but alright so far as a step forward in racial relations goes. I think she is going to try her hand again. She told me that she had been to town twice

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to see my dentist. She is having some extractions made and shortly she plans to have a new "rack" or possibly "Wrack", - which is what the local darkies call a plate for artificial teeth. In connection with the dental department, I must say, it is quite charming that many of them refer to the plural of tooth as "toofies". I recall so distinctly how strenuously I attempted covering up my puzzled mental situation when first I learned of these peculiarities. I was talking to Zelma, Puny's wife, and Zelma is a graduate from a colored college in Baton Rouge, when she confided to me: "I ain't seen you is such a long time, and since then, I've been having a lot of misery with my toofies and so I jus' decided I'd be done with 'em all and so I done got me a brand new rack!"

Leaving Clemence's, Mr. Bachelier wanted to walk along the spillway bayou, in the general direction of Little River. It was pleasant, a warm wind blowing and the sky overcast with clouds. It sprinkled a little before we got home.

Impressed by the spillway section of some 14 acres, which you may recall Dora has spoken of as a desirable piece of land, Mr. Bachelier thought I should negotiate with Regis Metoyer's mother for the piece. I know why Mr. Bachelier likes it, - it is fertile land and has plenty of pecane trees on it. Mr. Bachelier thought one could net about \$500.00 a year on the pecanes.

I told him I thought Celine's 40 acre track, slap across the river from Arentbourg would be a better buy. We discussed that lay out at length. He suggested that I have a talk with Celine, asking her if she would care to sell. He says he thinks I ought to have it, or some other plot on Cane River in this region. He says that he can readily borrow the money from the bank for me, although at the moment he has no cash.

It certainly is kind of him to offer to assist in the matter, but I can't think of any reason why I should acquire any land through such a procedure until circumstances provide funds to operate such a tract to financial advantage.

Possibly Mr. Bachelier feels I could sell such a piece of land advantageously, - and I am quite sure I could. People from all around the South West, and especially Texas, are forever trying to acquire a slice of land on Cane River, but to no avail, since the Hertzogs, Cohens, Henrys, Comptons and Jones are forever acquiring odd small strips ever before the outside world knows those pieces are for sale. And the Purdhomes, further up the river, never do sell.

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Enjoyin' the confidence of the prospective disposer of property is the trick, I think, although the individual small tracts grow less and less numerous each year. It is possible that some turn over in such a piece of property might be executed quite advantageously sometime, but I certainly don't want to secure Celine's 40 acre tract, and plant a hunk of old, big hatted Texas, slap across the river from the terrace of Arentbourg.

Well, we shall see what gradually unrolls as the season progresses.

Back home at 3:30, I worked on a number of odds and ends on this keyboard, and then flew to supper, with Dan Henry having arrived from the hospital for his three day leave. He seems in excellent form and manages to get along alright with the use of but a single arm, the other still heavily encased in some vast to-do.

Following supper, - and it was dark, we all sat with the Madam in the upper chamber, J. H. joining us. We talked of everything in the world, - save what I wanted to hear most, - the latest twist in the case of the pecane poachers. I shall have to learn that on the morrow, - or later tonight, for I think I shall take to the road, although it is starless tonight, for I need some fresh air and an opportunity to think about a heap of things for planting at Arentbourg, and of one who provided so much for it, including a name.....

It certainly is kind of him to offer to assist in the matter, but I can't think of any reason why I should require any kind of assistance, and I am sure that I can manage to provide for myself through such a procedure until a circumstance provides to operate such a thing to financial advantage.

Locally Mr. Bachelier feels I could well use a piece of land advantageously, - and I am quite sure I could. People from all around the south coast, and especially Texas, are for ever trying to acquire a piece of land on the river, but to no avail, since the Metzger, Coburn, Henry, Compton and Jensen are forever acquiring odd small strips every where the outside world knows those pieces are for sale - and the purchases, further up the river, never do sell.

1475

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And finally I slipped the next letter or card to her, and for very much interested in the contents of "The Night, and I resume our little conversations, for it has been another busy day, and tomorrow bids fair to be likewise. First off, I reckon you would like to hear how Brother made out with the second part of the Mother Goose rhyme, which in the original runs thus: The King was in the Counting House, counting out his money, The Queen was in the parlour, eating bread and honey, The maid was in the garden, hanging out clothes, When along came a blackbird, and snipped off her nose.

Brother attacked the piece this morning with moderation, but it was evident he was working up to a crescendo. Here's the way he did it: The King was in his Counting House, a-countin' out his money, The Queen was in her parlour-house, a-eatin' bread and honey, A man was in the garden, hanging up his clothes When one of them big old black birds came along and snipped his nose ssssslap off.

Well, yesterday was like today and today like yesterday, except there was mail, including one piece that pleased me no end. It bore a Wednesday date line, and I do hope everything went well to make the balance of the week profitable for all concerned, with conventions.

I had an arm full of second class mail when I went to the big house, and a scattering of cards and letters for the Madam. The first card I handed her was something of a surprise, although we had some confusion getting to look at the mail, what with Orleia and Clemence working about in the Madam's room. But finally we got to the card, addressed to the Madam, and she began reading, after looking at the signature, - "Mrs. Will Lake". The card read astonishingly enough, somewhat like this: "Just made a 500 mile round trip from Fort Worth to Wood to view the paintings of Clemence Hunter. Have wife Mr. Pipes, asking if we can have a showing of her things in Fort Worth regardless."

Did I fall out of my chair. Did Clemence's perreque slip off side ways? - And then, said the Madam, still confused by the doings going on around her: "What does that Lake woman mean? Who in the world is some painter by the name of Clemence

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Hunter. Somebody I never heard of."

And briskly I slipped the next letter or card to her, and got very much interested in the contents of it. Then came a nice letter from Mr. Pipes to her, and we went through that, and then Mr. Bachelier came in, and somehow in the excitement, the mail spilled on the floor, and somehow the first postcard found its way into my pocket, and from there on out, the whole business was completely forgotten and it never dawned on the Madam the the artistk of whom she had never heard was making strange faces in my direction, and each of us were silently congratulating the other on the good luck that the synchronization department works no better than it does at times.

I enclose a letter from Dora which also arrived in the same mail. It speaks for itself. I shall respond, recommending that he write la Haygood immediately, asking that a form be sent to the following address:

Clemence Hunter, care of Francois Mignon, Melrose, Louisiana.

Then I shall ask Bill Hinton to hand me any incoming mail thus addressed. Dora can make out and file the application. In the event a grant is made, the checks will come in the same fashion, as indicated above. The checks can then be deposited in some local bank, and Clemence will have an egg, - a nest egg, that will last her much beyond the year's time that the several checks are made to cover.

The only reference I have to the Haygood suggestion is her dumbness in suggestion that Barnett Kane should be mixed up in any of this. As for Mrs. George Stearn, I could her out. I have entre alright with her, as she is the one who sponsored, and paid for the printing of Caroline Dorman's book, but she is more or less a typical Club woman, I believe, and I shall approach the matter of Louisiana showings, of the masterpieces through some other channel.

I enjoyed your nice, nice letter in every detail, and perhaps the nicest part was your account of your Yonker's trip, and your throwing about with Daisey, whom, I feel sure, greatly relished the whole business. And mya I congratulate you on your finding of the Baedeker's Northern Germany and Southern Germany. Those are two wonderful finds, and perhaps the most important ones in the whole collection we are establishing. For the material in those will, in so many regrettable instances, never be printed again, and many of the historic places and things will only be remembered in times to come through their listings in those pages. I reckon one on the Low Countries should be acquired, - if possible, - and one on the British Isles, - or on England, and probably one on Italy for those items, - I assume, represent the lands that were most heavily devastated, and are therefore likely never to be detailed in print again, - at least, not the things that have thus vanished forever from the earth.

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Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Thanks for a perfectly grand letter, by air, in Saturday's post.

I wanted to respond immediately, but Saturday and Sunday were so filled with little odds and ends that I never did get within reach of this machine.

No week end visitors arrived, so I imagine perhaps the Book fair crowd returned to New Orleans and Baton Rouge direct.

Mr. Bachelier got off for Little River, about noon. I think I have said before that he lives two miles up Little River from the Clouteirville area, - I imagine his place would be just to the East of Magnolia, although I don't recall if the map of that area shows his location.

I got things pretty well in order so as to hear about The American Frontier at the usual time on Sunday, and I got half way through the thing when some pilgrims came, and I missed the balance of the program. But what I heard, I liked, and, if memory serves, I think I have discussed the influence of the frontier on American character in other epistles. By the way, in using that word, I am impelled to ask if you have heard that old saw: - The school boy, when asked the meaning of the word, epistle, said it that an epistle was the wife of an apostle.

J. H. drove to Monroe, La., on Sunday afternoon to catch a train for Washington, and Dan asked me to ride with him to Camp Polk, where he had to return, following his three day leave. One goes to Camp Polk, near Leesville, via Derry, and straight west, through Gorham, and the somewhat desolate hill country, most of which has long since been denuded by lumber companies. We dropped Celeste at Magnolia on the way over, and picked her up, coming home. Fugabou came to see me on Sunday, and we did a little planning for Arenbourg. Fugabou says that Clarence Compton has an excellent "outfit" that is attached to a tractor which will greatly facilitate the lake digging business, and Fugabou thinks that with his tractor, - Fugabou's and with Ezra's, - they are both plantation machines, of course, we

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can dig "us-es" a pretty lake in a jiffy.

Of course, it isn't going to be a lake at all, but rather just a good sized pond, but it will be big enough, I hope, to mirror the eventual little houses, and the blooming magnolias and pears when a few more springs roll 'round.

On the accompany sheet, you will notice one of my inimitable maps. . . The proportions are curious, as is the map itself, but it recalls the layout, and indicates the adjoining properties. Eventually, in years to come, we might purchase the tiny piece, now belonging to Alfred Llorenz, as the only important part of his holdings lie on the East side of the Bermuda Road. As for "Fonsie's property," I am hoping that one day we may secure a hundred feet or so, lying along the margin of the river, running directly South from about where the little crosses are, in order that the terrace might be further extended. Those little crosses, by the way, indicate a proposed hedge to cut off the main house at Arenbourg, - the terrace, etc., from the other unit, venturing about the proposed lake. I reckon that hedge will eventually be extended along the drive leading into the property, going out as far as the Bermuda road, and will be a great help in the event I should like to have a little more land.

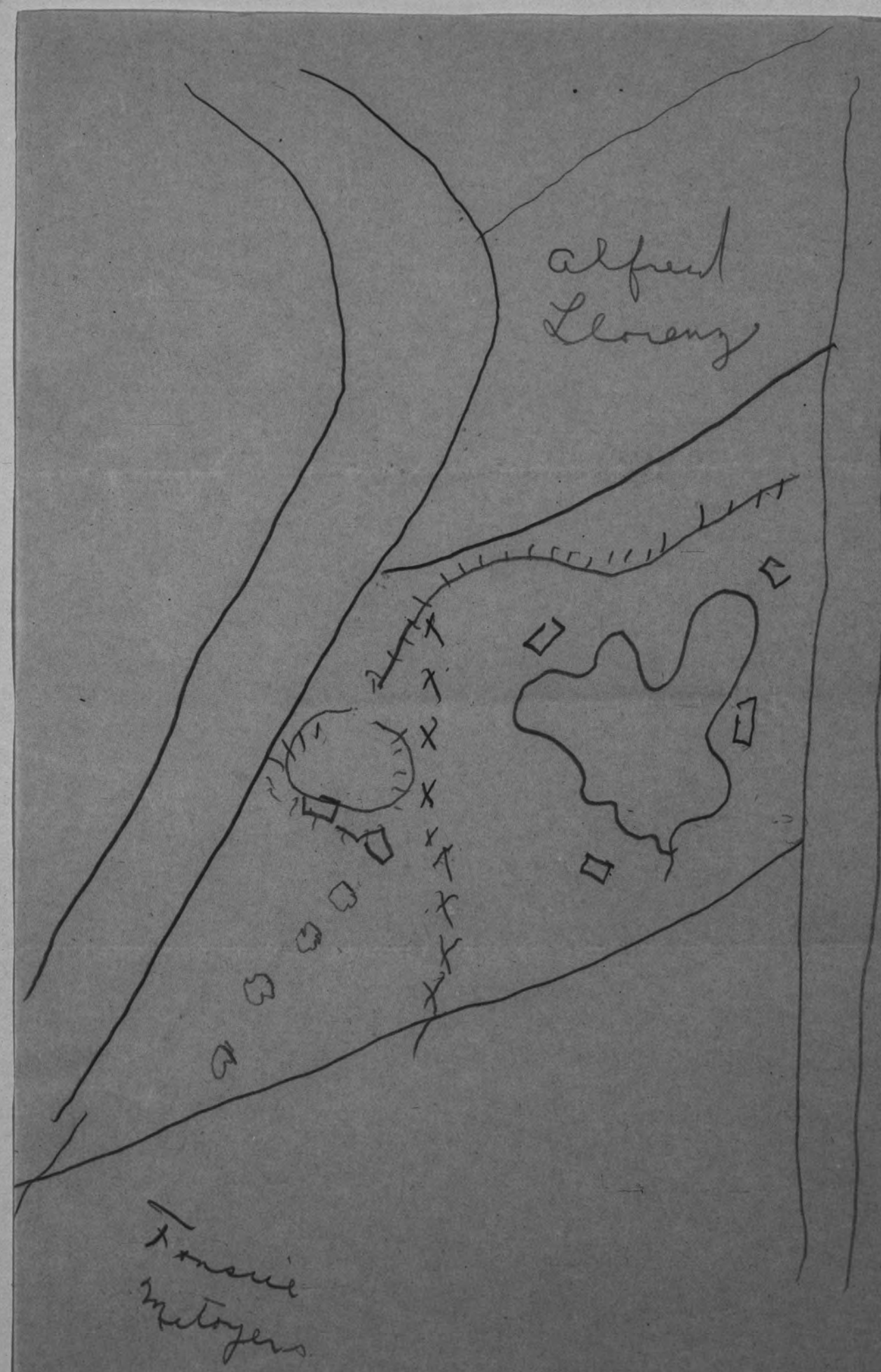
One nice thing about such a lay-out is the fact that the one unit can be quite separate from the other, entirely cut off at will, although so close that by merely stepping through a gate in the hedge one can step into quite a different type of scene.

I'm afraid I talk to endlessly of Arenbourg, and you will forgive me, I hope, for the endless way I detail the anticipatory doings. But I do like to share this with you from day to day, as things unfold, for after all, it does represent a foundation on which quite a framework of happiness can be built.

The weather continues warm, and thanks to some heavy rains on Friday and Saturday, there will be little cotton picked today. In consequence, I am going to try for another visit to Mme. Antin-Rockque's this morning, and if there aren't too many people about, we may have some success in borrowing some nice ante bellum hardware, or hinges, locks, etc., and a small slave-made armchair. . . . If I can lay hands on them, I shall enclose letters from Mrs. Brandon and Paula Parlange, neither of which are especially interesting, but which I thought you might care to glance through. If you have done so already, and destroyed the same, it is all right. If you have not, however, and could find it convenient to return the Parlange one, - if I find it to send, - I shall file it. I shall skip for the moment, and much more on the morrow, I trust, when I shall get caught up with a lot of things that have taken up too much time during these past few days.....

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November 13th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

From the tracings, you will gather that I rounded up some slave-made hardware at Madame Aubin's yesterday.

The one at the left is the hook, attached to the inside of one of the double doors, with this foot long object going across to the other door, - both on the inside, when one wishes to keep the doors fastened shut. I think it a nice piece.

The item in the upper right hand corner is the old hand made hinge. From its contour, you may readily see how the sharp point is driven into the door casing, and with an accompanying one, how the old, foot long iron hinges, are attached to the same.

I didn't get very far in the furniture department, although I did bring home a couple of armoires, but not of much interest. One was hand made, but rather mediocre. The other is merely a convenient piece of furniture to put things in. I also brought along a rather non-descript dressing table, of no particular interest and a crude old bench, strong but purely utilitarian.

There was also a little trunk, something in the nature of a child's trunk, and while that is of no great value, - I presume it was contrived about 1870, it is quite useful to store manuscripts in, - or some such.

The hardware department, however, pleased me very much. In all this comprises three sets of solid items, - one set of blinds and two sets of doors, complete with all their ante bellum accoutrements, - that is to say, the hinges and iron pegs on which they swing, together with the fine old hooks.

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The set of blinds is about 5 feet in height; one of the sets of doors about 7 feet; the other about 8 feet. In all cases the slave made hardware is perfect for the atmosphere that will obtain at Arenbourg, and while one or two new boards will have to be substituted in the case of one set of the doors, that can be accomplished very readily, so that I feel the treasures thus rescued from destruction were items that well merited saving.

There was scant in-coming mail yesterday, although the Parlange inventory of 1842 did arrive, and appears to cover about 15 pages of single spaced typewritten material. What with being in the road, I had no opportunity to run through the inventory, but I am quite sure it is going to be very instructive and very entertaining at the same time, for it is so arranged, as was so often done in earlier times, so that the various personal belongings, - in fact, everything is listed, not in groups, representing, say all the chairs or all the tables in the house, - but rather each individual item in the house is listed, room by room. That of course, offers a detailed picture of each room's furnishings. And in this case, the various slaves, - probably not found in the rooms, are also listed in some detail, including their names, a feature which always appeals ever so strongly to me.

I had a short chat with Bill Hinton at the store on my return from Mme. Autin-Roque's. He thought the little lake or pond idea was swell, and says he is sure that Fugatou and Ezra could turn the trick easily within a week. He further told me that a little later, so he understood, some well known company is bringing out a first rate pump and tank, designed for use in such rural localities as this one, and that a representative has promised him a pump and tank for something around \$50.00. He says that next year he will keep me in mind, when this offer becomes a reality, and that will be nice, for that will guarantee our water supply from there on out, - not only for domestic uses but for the gardens as well.

So the plans for Arenbourg formulate themselves, and one bit of historic building is incorporated into the whole establishment, and the practical goes hand in hand with the artistic.

One nice thing about things like the pump, etc., these things, if secured through the store, can be purchased at wholesale prices, and with the store paying the bills, the charges can run to suit the convenience of the purchaser. Naturally, with the account in balance, I intend to keep it in that situation, but it is good to know that in case something advantageous could be secured at a particular time, it can always be managed. - I write all this in something of a rush, as I am pressed for time and I have been slowed up by a nasty cold. I can't cruise on my index finger, but tomorrow I shall be better.

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November 14th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Yesterday's trains were late, and so the postman brought only what he had on hand from the night before. In consequence, we received only second class mail, and that included the nice copy of Life, which I have enjoyed turning through ever so much. I shall catch up with my reader in a day or two, and digest some of the printed material, as well as the clipping which is included in the copy of Life.

There were so many things in the issue, - the devastation of the atomic bomb, - a photo or two from that city in Japan where Dr. Miller once lived; the Roosevelt Hideaway, etc., etc. I was enchanted with the reproductions of the paintings in color, too, and I must draw Clemence's attention to the one of the lady of color, dressed in white and occupying a seat on a white iron bench. I thought that very striking, and I think it may inspire our girl friend to do something along parallel lines.

And speaking of the girl friend, recalls the possibility of a grant, and that makes me want to talk with you as to the best method of handling that business, - especially if the grant should be made.

Since she does not write, I have suggested to Dora that he have the application sent her, in care of me. I shall advise the clerk to hand me such mail, - thus addressed, and forward the application to Dora to be filled out. Such applications have to be signed by the applicant, and I am wondering if it is best to sign for her, with the notation of "X, - Her Mark", or if it would be better just to sign her name for her.

In the event of success, I believe there is an affidavit to be signed, which I should prefer not to have done by J. H. And then will come the monthly checks, and I am not sure how it would be best to have those handled. I have a feeling that it would be better for either Dora or me to handle those, since we can probably spread them in such a manner as to work to her greatest advantage, although I shall of course not think of doing that, without receiving her approval.

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I am inclined to think that a portion of the money might well be spent to arrange a cabin comfortably for her on Arentbourg. I think she would like that very much, but there are so many considerations involved, that I really would love to discuss the matter with someone before making the first move. The first move, of course, will determine a whole train of subsequent ones, and so I want to think the thing through to the ultimate before embarking on the first step. I shall turn the thing over in my mind a bit, and confide in you further in relation to this problem.

Although the applications are supposed to be in prior to January 1st, the grants, you will recall, are not announced until April or May. In the mean time, the cabin I have in mind for Clemence, which is on a segment of property adjoining, but not actually on Arentbourg, will be let for the year. I do not propose to take that on the assumption that a grant will be made. And yet, if things turn as they may, it would be of the greatest advantage to Clemence to be situated there, and if that cabin is to be taken, it must be spoken for before the 1st of the year.

Well, I apologize for rambling along at such a great rate on something which cannot very well offer a topic of conversation, and yet just my bringing up these points in talking to you, they somehow seem to become more transparent. We shall eventually see what we shall see.

I made a round of the magnolias in the Melrose front garden yesterday. I find the layers are doing nicely and may be cut now. I don't know if you are acquainted with the layers. May I tell you about them.

When the limbs of the trees grow so low that they touch the ground, one scrapes the bark from the limb at the point of its contact with the earth. Then a rock is put on the limb at that point and dirt covering the whole business is pushed up. One usually leaves from two to four feet of the extreme end of the branch to run free along the ground. Where the bark has been scraped, and covered with earth, roots begin putting out, while the limb itself continues to be fed in part by the main tree. When roots are well established, - after about 6 months to a year, the branch is cut away, at the point between the tree and the spot where it enters the ground, where the new roots are forming. Thus is the layer made, and a new tree, independent

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of the parent, is formed. We made quite a few last year, - Mr. Bachelier and I, and the new ones thus formed, will form a part of the magnolia avenue at Arentbourg, without costing anyone a cent. I am hoping, however, to find some rather larger specimens in the Alexandria area with Mrs. Rand one of these days. These larger ones, - if located, will form the primary line, and the Melrose layers the secondary.

I have done this sort of thing quite successfully with Chinese magnolias and with gardenias in times gone by, and some of the layers from the better gardenia bushes, will form a nucleus for the Arentbourg collection. I made perhaps a half dozen layers of a very nice gardenia, - but very small they were, - perhaps 6 inches. But by coddling them along at little at the start, these are now three feet tall, and just right for moving at this time. I think I shall be able to pick them up with plenty of dirt around them, and I am hoping to get them transplanted at Arentbourg by February at the latest, in which case, they will never know they have been moved; and will bloom madly along about May.

Yesterday Bill Hinton told me that "Fonsie" Metoyer is planning to buy himself a tractor this year, and that was good news to me. At the moment, "Fonsie" uses mules to plough his 40 acres, keeping the mules on the river bank, a little south of Uncle Door-stone's cabin. With the purchase of the tractor, "Fonsie" will have no further use for his mules, so that another obstacle will be removed, - with only Uncle Door-stone remaining. A tractor cannot run up too close to the margin of the river, and so, eventually, we may be able to get the river bank, some hundred or two feet wide, running all the way from Alfred Lorenz on South through "Fonsie's" entire holdings. That isn't at all necessary for the general scheme of things, but it would afford an additional promenade and double the length of the magnolia allee, eventually.

On the home front, everything rocks along much as usual. The Madam seems to be in pretty good spirits, and talks perpetually about me getting to planting. She continues to come down stairs for supper, but only then, and returns to the second floor immediately afterward. She finds it difficult to do much leaning over, - such as picking up something from the floor, - since such a position seems to give her "a swimmin' in the head". Neither she nor her children seem to be able to relax without considerable fulmination against Fate, but circumstances are forcing her to slow up considerably.

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Yesterday the Bookmobile came by, when I chanced to be at the store, and I chatted with the ladies in charge. Although in the type of business they are in, neither of them seemed to know when Lane was scheduled to speak in Natchitoches. Payne said on Sunday that he is to speak in Alexandria today, today being Wednesday, so I suppose he is likely to be passing this way momentarily. Instructions, however, have been quite explicit, - sent from the big house to the store, that he is to be whisked along, should he pop by unannounced.

Curiously enough, until mentioning the Bookmobile, I had never thought of it in regards to Arantour. In that Institution, we find a traveling library passing by our door every Tuesday, and we can readily telephone for books ahead of time, if we wish a Tuesday delivery on a Monday morning desiderata. It is usually a gay gal or two that makes the rounds of the Parish, and Celeste usually has them in for coffee when they reach Melrose. We shall be a little further up the road, and so will have an edge of the coffee dispensing proposition, when things are established, - and through the services of that organization we shall not only have our literary ants coming to our door, but we shall have the news of the latest town wrinkles spread out before us as we sip our mid morning coffee on the terrace. Must skip now.....

In the home front, everything goes along as usual. The house seems to be in pretty good shape, and I am pretty sure about not getting to blinding. The condition of the house is about as good as it can be. The house is in pretty good shape, and I am pretty sure about not getting to blinding. The condition of the house is about as good as it can be. The house is in pretty good shape, and I am pretty sure about not getting to blinding. The condition of the house is about as good as it can be.

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November 15th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

You will infer, from the enclosed, that Dora doesn't care much for the forth-coming Guabo Ya Ya.

Frankly, I am not much surprised. Lybe said to me some time ago that it was going to make a lot of people mad. Apparently it is already fulfilling the prediction.

At the same time, I am wondering why Houghton Mifflin decided not to include the chapter on Voo-doo-ism, so that from that rejected section of the manuscript, Mr. Tallent could fashion an entire book by itself. If that section may have been too hot even for Houghton Mifflin, then surely Macmillan could scarcely have welcomed it, - and if too tame, it would seem they would likewise have rejected it. The so-called Tallent thing is scheduled for early 1946, and we shall see what happens when it makes its bow.

Although we had a frost last night, - and one, I fear that may cook the banana leaves, the days continue bright and fair. I am hoping the Miss Ramsey may be able to carry out her tentative play to get here about the 16th, - I think that was the date she mentioned, - but I fear the frost on the night of the 14th-15th, may well have spoiled a couple of shots that I had hoped for. But the gin is still going full tilt, and that will afford some important items, and may she get here before that number ceases to function for this season.

I was talking with some surveyors yesterday. They were just completing an over-all for a new highway between Montrose and Melrose. That highway was, until last year, a Parish thoroughfare. The Henrys got it transferred to the State, and accordingly it will be considerably improved, raised above the level of the yearly high water level of Spring, and surfaced with something that will eliminate the annual autumnal mud. The surveyors tell me that the blueprints call for the road to be run straight from Montrose to Melrose, and the building of a new bridge over cane river. I am so accustomed to the old one that I shall regret its replacement by some kind of a fine structure. It is quite possible, however, that the new bridge will not be seen from the terrace at Arantour, since the straightening of the road may place the bridge a little south of its present situation, and that may eliminate it entirely from view, so far as we are concerned. Perhaps that is just as well, should the new one turn out to be of too super-duper design, - and the plain surface

of the river cannot be much improved by any contraption of the State's Engineering Department. One curious thing the new road is going to do: - it will run slap through the middle of the present Melrose garage, which, I suppose, means that the garage is going to eventually be moved a little, - one way or the other.

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What with it being so "air-ish", as the darkies say, when they mean it is chilly, I seem to have lots more early morning visitors, with letters to be written on matters of insurance, purchases, invitations to visit and some straight out epistles of courtship. I am always delighted to take care of these little matters, and doubly so for those who can neither read nor write. But what with too many of them in a single morning, plus Brother on my hands, - and often before sun up, I find these visitations somewhat deadly in the matter of my own correspondence.

It is a very interesting inclination to note, - and may the same tendency maintain itself a decade hence: - Brother tends more and more toward squirming about in his chair, as our studies become a little more difficult. To my surprise, he can think of more things he would ask if he can do for me, - and I must say I think it is more the novelty of this household and a desire to be engaged in manual employment than anything else.

This morning we did some arithmetic, but we didn't get very far. Breakfast had come some time after Brother's arrival, and while I had a cup of chocolate, Brother had one too, plus a couple of slices of toast, for which he had manifested a desire for in a most circuitous fashion. After walking a mile in this crisp morning air, I reckon he must have come by his appetite honestly enough, - and I was delighted that he could have the toast rather than the cats, who usually get it. But no sooner had we got to going good in the mathematical department, than Brother said he would love to wash the dishes, instead of leaving them for Aurelia. I consented, and wrote a couple of letters on the subject of lost persons, addressed to the Red Cross, on behalf of two early morning visitors. We got back into the direction of Einstein, but Brother, in the midst of things, observed that he sure would like to shine my shoes. I conceded they needed shining, - not so much for themselves, as for something by which Brother could busy his hands. I think I am going to give Brother a little education, but not such, I fear. But if he learns how to do a few things well in the manual department, that training will perhaps be as much to his advantage as the more formal things in the mental department.

Of course, the whole thing is going to end up by me learning more from Brother than Brother will learn from me, and so instead of worrying too much about his mental development, perhaps I would do well to look to my own, with a faint hope of keeping up with him.

I walked along the Bermuda Road in the moonlight last night. It looked awfully limited in space. After all this, I am wondering if our little lake will turn out just a puddle.....

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November 16th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

To hand your nice report of Monday, and I conjure up in my imagination as best I can what a feathered perruque, without the plumage of a bird, might look like. But I am sure it is nice.

Rather inclined toward the old fashioned side, I always maintain a mental image of the style with the knot at the back, not unlike Ann Harding as she once appeared in Holiday. And speaking of that lady, - if Memoray serves, she is to appear on the Lux Radio program on this coming Monday night, - the 19th, - if I remember correctly. You may be sure I shall be well tuned in, and practically all ears.

As a matter of fact, I haven't heard tell of the lady in ever so long, - not since that outrageous husband of hers, - one Bannister, kidnapped their child, or some such business.

Well, you were quite right in supposing you would put me in a dither by dangling something to excite my imagination, without giving the slightest hint as to what I should conjure up. My mind flew around and around like a Whirling Dervish, and finally just collapsed completely, but this morning I awoke to find it whirling around and around again, so I guess I might as well admit that your intention worked exceedingly well, and, if I may say so, you are something of a tag to have succeeded so well.

I appreciate your thoughtfulness in advising me as to the Gignan correspondence relative to the pecans. I am not surprised that you did not find this year's crop quite up to usual standards. It seems to be the same way in all sections, and everyone is unable to explain the reason, since the season appeared to be ideal for all kinds of vegetation, - but perhaps they thrive better under certain unusual conditions.

Of the situation as regards those who were mixed up in the "lifting" of the crop, nothing new has developed. All of them are out on bail, and most of them are currently picking cotton, awaiting a December Court, I believe. What with my usual barber, Jack, having no yet received his new clippers, I had Rodney Payne cut my hair on Saturday, and as he is one of those who are threatened with a six year term in jail for the doings, I was quite interested in his frank discussion of the affair.

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alt ough little new light was thrown on the business. The Henrys were rather inclined to eliminate Rodney from the list of the guilty, until Sam Brown observed well and a long, that Rodney Payne had always had too much money. That somehow removed Rodney's chances for special consideration, and I think, - in fact, I know, that Sam Brown was merely trying to cover his own tracks by directing attention to those of others. The Henrys are smart in making money but pretty dumb in the more delicate manifestations of human relations, and in consequence Sam Brown can pretty easily put things over on them without much trouble.

I appreciate your help in setting me straight on The New York Times business, by advising me that you had not entered the subscription in pursuance of any request from this area. I can't imagine how the thing got to going, and the Madam continues to think that it might be coming from you, and we might just as well let the thing rock along that way, - without any reference to the matter either way.

She did not, of course, read me the obituary of Jerome Kern. She is a headline reader, when it comes to newspapers, - and some days she glances at them and some days she doesn't. I have heard his death reported on the radio, but that is all. Accordingly I was enchanted to have the particulars, as mentioned in your letter. I certainly did like many of his pieces, and especially those from Show Boat. I am wondering if he did anything for any of the Ziegfield Follies. There is a tune they play occasionally from an old, old Follies, that I always liked: "A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody" which seems to have been recorded by a flock of different orchestras, including Wayne King and perhaps Reisner, - one of them having quite a heavy harp or dual piano business that was quite lovely. "Rose Room", also by W. King, is quite lovely. I think, although I think Kern was not the composer. Someone once told me that Hilton, - of London, was scheduled to make a Rose Room recording, but I never did hear it, and I know not if it was undertaken before the buzz-bombs got to flying too thick and fast.

I have just received a jolt on my pink flamingo business. Dr. Knipmayer told me yesterday that the American flamingoes are only about three feet tall. At Valencay the pink flamingo or some such bird, as at least 6 or 7 feet tall, and I thought that was the type of thing I was getting. Are you up on your bird life sufficiently, - you with a feathered perruque, - to enlighten me on the identity of some crane-like birds, pink in color, that stand about 6 feet tall. I could be wrong, and yet I am positive that those Talleyrand birds were tall-tall. Must skip for the moment.....

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November 17th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The postman, in taking my letter of this morning, wherein I referred to the Lux Radio program, brought me one from you wherein you mentioned the same thing. I was enchanted.

As I listened to A Guest In The House on Monday night, I realized that somebody must have been catching up on the Grignan situation. I thought the play good, although, either through faulty listening or some such, it wasn't clear to me in the final phase of the thing that the old lady in the piece had filled up the bag's room with birds, which I concluded she had done just as the play closed.

But even as you, the most thrilling news of the whole business was that Ann Harding is to do Monday's play, and that will be grand, because I shall like her not only for herself but also for one of whom she will remind me.

I saw Clemence this morning at the big house. She was sewing carpet for the Madam, and she told us a great many things of surprising interest in the folk lore department. I shall burden you with but one. She said her grandmother who lived to be 110 years old "had" a lot of things from the old folks, and before she died, she gave Clemence a little bag to tie around her neck whenever Clemence should have the toothache. Clemence said she still has it. The bag contained nothing more or less than a tiny section of the skin of a snake, - a piece of "the shed", as she called it, being taken from the cast off coat which the reptile divests itself of each year. I didn't ask her how effective the thing has proven to be down through the years, but I gather it leaves something to be desired, since Clemence is in the process of getting herself a new "rack".

In a hurried aside, Clemence asked me to pass to her house soon, as she wanted me to see some of her new pictures by day light. I accordingly went by this evening, and found some of them quite delightful. Mary Frances also has a couple that are of merit, - or at least, of promise, - one of gathering pecanese, - one child up in the tree shaking it, and the other on the ground, with a shower of the things falling. There is another she painted of their house, which is also quite

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nice, and will probably make Dora fall out with homesickness.

I must try to remember to tell Dora something else the darkies are saying, for their has been a visitation of God on one of the Little River dwellers who defiled St. Augustine's Church back yonder during high water. I may have told you at the time, - and I may not, that in desperation, when it was obvious that the advancing waters were going to drown all the cattle, that Will Allen, who lives next to the Church, had somehow contrived to get 8 or 10 head of cattle, entrusted to his care, into the sanctuary. They were quite safe there for a time, wandering about among the pews, but eventually the water seeped up into the Church itself, and so several of the cows got up on to the dais and ate their hay from the pulpit, while some of the calves frolicked around in the water on the main floor. Eventually one or two of the cows died, - "slap on the pulpit", and people were shocked, and said no good would come to Will Allen.

Well, following the flood, Will Allen contrived a domicile for himself in town, where he spent the week ends with his wife, who, to keep the record straight, it Mr. Brew's aunt. They passed their week days on Little River, where Will's wife is a teacher in the Rosenwald school, also hard by the Allen home.

Last night, while Will's wife, I believe, was on Little River, and Will was in their Natchitoches home with his mother-in-law, Eva, the Natchitoches residence caught fire, burning up everything except Will and Eva. They telephoned down here to have Will's wife bring up some clothing for them, as they had escaped in their night clothes only.

And so, as you may well have anticipated, tongue are wagging madly along Cane and Little River's, and it is the consensus of opinion that old Will Allen is now paying for having outraged the House of God. And there begins a folk lore number that will unroll and enlarge itself for generations.

Friday saw J. H. return from Washington, and I have only talked with him momentarily since his return. He did say that Stephen looks awful, but is making a very steady come-back, and is able to be up on his feet for 10 or 15 minutes a day now. It seems that while he was conferring with General MacArthur in the Philippines, just before the collapse of Japan, some kind of faulty food was consumed and some sort of oriental dysentery developed immediately. Then when an operation for adhesions developed on his return to Washington, nothing could be undertaken in that direction until the dysentery had been cured, so that the holding up of the one tended to complicate the other. But he is alright now, and will possibly make a round to Melrose sometime after the first of the year.

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Joe Henry is scheduled to be out of the Army after the first of the year, - he ran down to Washington from Philadelphia, to see J. H., and this morning Paynie talked with Dan by telephone in the hospital at Camp Polk, and the cast has been removed from Dan's arm, so that he may be able to come to Melrose for Thanksgiving.

From down the road, I learn that a physician is expected from someplace, - West Virginia, possibly, to look at the real estate in Cloutierville, with a view to purchasing. Originally the house was bought in 1939 for \$1,500., and what with some improvements, is now on the market at ten thousand, which ought to represent something of a profit, I should think.

Dr. John Gray and Steele Burden of Baton Rouge, called this afternoon, but I slipped out one door as they came in the other, for I wanted to get along to see Clemence, and I shall catch them on their next round for a couple of words of advice on Arentbourg problems. Steele Burden has charge of all the landscape at L. S. U., and so he might be able to give me a couple of pointers, although I am not sure that any of our problems are especially in his field. But I shall write their mutual friend, Dr. Cotton, for particulars regarding "Bogganite", that remarkable stuff that puts a floor on any old lake, pond or puddle, just by sprinkling the stuff a round a little, - and that may be helpful.

J. H. brought home a copy of GUMBO YAYA, but nobody has had a chance to do more than glance through the Preface. I notice in that that Lyle lists negroes to whom he has turned for advice on certain points. He begins the people thus named by citing Joseph Gilmore, (his man Friday, or course,) and eventually gets around to a college president, etc., in the same sentence. Hummmmm. I must say that book is attractively gotten up, but I must hold decision until I have read some of it, before making any guess about "what the harvest will be".

A letter to the Madam this morning from Deborah Abramson, Miss Culver's Secretary, indicates that la belle Essae Mae wasn't able to get over to Dallas, but Miss Sarah Jones and la Deborah attended in her place, and the letter says that Lyle was the center of attraction and got along just fine. Nothing was said about Harnett Kane, - in fact the letter never referred to him. In passing, I might observe that it does seem a little strange that Gumbo Yaya is floaking around, - both in Norman, Oklahoma and in Washington, D. C., and yet the Madam hasn't received one from Lyle, but perhaps Dallas "done him up", and he will perhaps send one later.

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I am so glad you mentioned some of the books you have in mind to glance over, - if and when opportunity presents itself.

It's nice, just thinking of you glancing through them now and then, and how satisfying it's going to be when we get a place for them at Arenbourg, and we may draw on them at random to the better digest Louisiana, what with those 17th and 18th century back-drops, and in lots of instances, just for the sheer joy of sharing those treasures together. From where I sit, it looks to me as though the vestiges of the last half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries are likely to linger longer on the banks of Cane River than almost any other place I can think of at the moment. And how pleasant it is going to be to share together the human side and the cultural records, as the great magnolias unfold their viory lamps and the butterfly lilies perfume the twilight air, as a million stars from the milk way get all tangled up on the surface of the river, just below our own little terrace, - and the rest of the world, save a few kindred souls, go whizzing right slap on by.

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November 20th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It was a busy week end. To begin with, - and that isn't important, one pronounces the name Haupt precisely as though it were spelled Hop.

Well Bertha and Hope Haupt, - and Hope Hop sounds silly for a sedate elderly maiden school teacher, came by on Saturday afternoon. They brought a Miss Allen from Massachusetts with them.

Ostensibly they were here to make a call. The Madam was tired when they arrived. She was more tired when they had left three hours later. They are just like cows, - well behaved, and kindly and just as dull as conversationalists.

Aurellia had come to prepare breakfast on Saturday morning, but she had to give up and go home about 8 a.m. She has tonsillitis.

Instead of asking Clemence to come and take over the kitchen, - the madam had one of those curious twists, and said she couldn't have Clemence in the house; - she would steal everything she had. And so, just to be consistent, she put Sam Brown into the culinary department. I shall skip reference to dinner. I ate none.

And at three o'clock a little before the arrival of Hope Haupt, Sam Brown arrived. He began cooking sausages at 3 for a 6 o'clock supper. I think they must have eventually been done. I never risked one.

And half an hour after the Haupts had comfortably seated themselves in the Madam's room, Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Pattison arrived. I was working on some magnolias when they drove in and so I invited them to my house. They had brought some grand home made chicken-onion-cream sandwiches with them, and some chocolate indians and some other nice little cakes and some wine. We really had quite a pleasant little buffet while we got caught up on our conversation.

They had been to see and hear one Kane lecture in Alexandria. He is ever so wide now, almost as wide as tall, - which isn't saying so much after all. He referred to the Madam in his speech, comparing her to the carfish under the levee, - which I still don't understand, nor do they.

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Eventually they went to call on the Madam, with the Haputs still entrenched. She told them if they would ring a buzzer, I would be delighted to see them and that they could come by and see her after their visit. Well, we did a round in the garden, Mrs. Rand and I, with the Haputs still sitting, - and about first dark, they decided they must get back to Alexandria, and the Haputs were still talking over their problems as teachers in Natchitoches.

J. H. and Eugene had already eaten their supper when I arrived, and I ate none, for two reasons, absence of hunger and presence of curious looking food. They madam had a glass of milk after the Haputs finally left.

The night was wonderful, and about 9 o'clock, I took to the road. I saw a few friends along my road toward the spillway. I stopped and chatted for a few moments with Clyde Claude Emmett Davis, Clemence's son-in-law. He said Clemence was at home.

I dropped by to see her. Mary Frances and Winnie Mae were already in bed. Clemence and her daughter, Jackie, who is Clyde's wife, were sitting by a "token" fire. We had a lot of chat'ing to do about everything, and I started back home about 10. Clyde told me he was going down to some place on Magnolia. I didn't see him when I returned home, but I did pass big Billy Porter who is the present husband of Nina, who is Elam's mama.

This more than accounted for the absence of the movie at Sammy's, for that has folded up and gone, and now people were foot-loose and fancy free, what with a fine, warm night, a big old moon, and some dance hall down on Magnolia reportedly doing a big business in the "swinging out" department.

Sunday morning, Sam Peace brought me some coffee about 6:30. He said Aurelia was still sick and would not be here before Tuesday probably. He said Sam Brown would not be to give breakfast, either. It seems that sometime between 10 and 12 on Saturday night, Sam Brown's wife, who also had gone to Magnolia, had cut Billy Porter pretty badly, and when Clyde tried to separate Roberta Brown and Billy, Roberta had stabbed in just under the heart and that he had been transported to the Charity Hospital in Alexandria, where his life hung in the balance.

All in all, Saturday was quite a day, and naturally, I am hoping that Clyde survives, what with Winnie May and Junior and Jackie and Clemence and all. Well, so the world turns.

On Sunday evening I learned that Mr. Black had come down this way and picked up Billy Porter and taken him to jail. He had also sought for Roberta Brown, but had been unsuccessful in locating her. I must go down and see Clemence this evening, but I am quite sure she will re-act quite differently than anyth ng one can conjure up. That make the going the more exciting.

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Clyde is a good boy, not worth too much, loves to drive an automobile better than anything else, is an excellent driver if not alone, - when he inclines toward wrecking them, but alright when accompanied, - he drove Dan and me to Camp Polk last week. The latest report from the hospital is that his normal blood count should be 130 and is presently at 44. Clemence's son, King, has given him some of his blood in a transfusion. If he survives today, he will live, they say. So may it be.

GUMBO YAYA to hand, and we have read Chapter 1, and skipped around a little in some of the others. I don't know how it will turn out, but I see no relation between Chapter 1 and the other things, - the latter being mostly folk-lore, customs, street cries, etc., while the former seems to be an attempt to give a picture of the Zulu section of Mardi Gras as lewd a picture as possible. I appreciate Dora's resentment, but even more I object to the unnecessary four letter words that are sprinkled too thickly through the conversation put in the mouths of the negroes.

I don't know anything about the trashy negroes of New Orleans, but of the country negroes, either in Natchitoches or Adams County. I know they are very remarkable, in that one almost never hears them use the usual curse words that so often besmirch the white man's talk. Once, the Melrose garage, I heard a mulatto just in from Chicago, swear, and the whole place just seemed to grow tight enough to burst, it all seemed so out of joint with the manners and customs as practiced in this area.

I guess the book may turn out to be a reference item for those interested in factual material on Louisiana ways, - and possibly nothing more. I doubt if it will have any popular appeal, and quite a few people will resent its rather tawdy spots. I think I would not be too proud to have my name attached to the thing, ne ther or either as co-author, like Eddie Dreyer and Robert Tallent, or as the Bishop and Essae Mae, as sponsors. The Sunday Times Picayune did not review the book. I suppose it will review it next week.

And Sunday morning, after it got going, went along alright until about time for invitation to Learning. Then Frances Henry, Paynie's wife called at the big house. She's alright the way co sin Marian might be alright, but not one to share invitation to Learning. And so I left the big house and came to mine, and got the thing tuned up, but before it was half done, Andy Bynog, - Aurelia's broghter knocked. He has blood poisoning in his wrist, with horrible dark purple streaks running up to his elbow. I did a round with him, and thence back to The Seven Who Were Hanged, but a few minutes later and another knock at my door. It was Miss Kate Perkins, who had driven down to Natchitoches from Monroe quite unexpectedly on Saturday night and Sunday morning, Hope Haupt, - of all people, - had driven them to Melrose for an hour's visit.

And so I can't tell you much about my reaction to the Russian opus, but I can say that I liked the radio personalities of the three speakers. I certainly would give a lot to hear you say the name of the day's chairman, - Professor Twilling, - for I think you might make it Prof. Trilling, and really get somewhere with it.

From what little I did hear, I was at a loss to understand why the 7 dead men had been chosen for a discussion of this kind, for I imagine that the book is of secondary importance and little known and of little interest, - book or author, to the radio audience.

But it is a great pleasure to listen to pleasant people, as all three discussing the book seemed to be, and the opportunity of learning something would have been welcomed regardless, if too many people hadn't been stirring about.

At the Madam's request, I telephoned Sister on Saturday night to inquire if the Wenks were "fixin" to come here on Sunday, and to tell them, - at the Madam's suggestion, that we had no cook at the moment. Well, at 8 p.m., Sister didn't know if she would come or not, but she was sure her husband was going to Shreveport. Of course they both came, and brought the three children and a nurse. But I never did see any of them, as J. H. had asked me to have Sunday dinner with him and Celeste over at their house, which I did, and it was delicious and I liked it.

So many other things to write, but I have already taken up too much of your good time, and accordingly I shall fold at this point, in actual word transmission, at least, but running right along in thought, -- and particularly at Lux Radio time tonight.....

November 20th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

"We are children of God, and as children, we shall grow together into maturity."

That was one line I liked a lot. But the exquisite pleasure of just hearing the lady's voice was enough, regardless of the context.

Immediately following the termination of the program, I turned the radio off. It was enough to have heard what I had, and I was content to be with my thoughts, without the clashing of other thoughts that might come in through the ether waves.

From my pillow, I could gaze across the white garden, marvelously white in a warm softshimmer of moonlight. The earth was quiet, there was so much for me to be thankful for. And falling off to sleep, I was supremely happy, thinking as I did, of another who had just been listening to the same program, and possibly holding as tight to the promise of eventual commitment as I.

The enclosures are of little interest, save to keep you abreast with how things turn in the Shreveport area. The Madam has suggested that I write Miss Robina, telling her that as Gumbo Ya-Ya in no way reflects the old Lyle that she knew, she would be waisting five dollars to invest in the book. I am not sure that I would forego the book on those grounds, for it appears to contain much data, even though the presentation of much of it is quite at variance with my ideas of good taste.

The postman, arriving late yesterday, brought two letters: from the Clippiner Service and one from Dora. But it was a busy day in these parts and I could not catch up with Mr. Brew until Lux Radio time, and so I chose to commune with a kindred soul through that medium and so reserve the pleasure of the letters until some time this morning.

With the cook still down with tonsillitis, I dined with J. H. and Celeste yesterday, with Celeste sending the Madam a tray to the big house, both for dinner and supper.

Dinner at Celeste's is always good, and there is a constant additional pleasure, aside from what one eats, what with the striking comparisons I am forever making as between the hostess and Anita, which lots of times introduces an element of humor, funny to no one but me, since I am the only one present to sense the parallels, but you will eventually re-act, I am sure, even as do I, when you notice the similarities.

1499

J. H. was, as usual, miles ahead of everybody, in the eating of his food. In the morning, he had gone to town, transacted business there, and had returned to go over the plantation from one end to the other, with one eye on the clock, preparatory to heading out for New Orleans or Baton Rouge or some such place at 11:45. He is whirling through space at such a great rate that I feel sure he will fall out one of these days. I think he is about 47 or 48, but already his hair has turned gray, and unless some twist of fate lays him on the shelf for a period, I am sure his departure for another world will be as swift as was his father's.

The latest news from Alexandria indicates that while Clyde Claude "Mett" Davi's blood count hovers around 40, it appears he is going to survive, unless something unforeseen develops. I am certainly glad, both for him and for his family.

Old Mr. Black has passed around this way and taken Billy Porter to jail, but has merely interviewed Roberta Brown. I reckon that little trip will result in nothing, and that all the participants in the frolic will be back in their accustomed places before long. I often think how enchanted are the lives of people on Cane River, where in full day or the black of night, a white person can go anywhere with absolute security, and yet how the people of color, even in the calmest of gatherings, can momentarily flirt with death, and as rapidly move back into the same security that envelopes their white associates in the general path of life.

Some little river people have passed this way this morning to see me, - kin folk of some of those "pecan" men, as the negroes on Cane River are now mockingly referring to those who find themselves entangled in the mesh of the law in reference to that unpleasant business. I think I have been able to work out a plan that will assist one of them at least. We shall see.

Brother has been here, too, to say his rhymes, and big old Peter, at 19, knowing much less in formal education than Brother, has joined in saying "Sing a song of six pins". I think I may have remarked to you before what Peter told me once when I asked him if he had ever been to school. He said he had. "Once, when I was a boy," he confided, "I went up to St. Mathews, but I didn't like it much, so I only staid half an hour!" - leaving him quite a ways from getting a Ph. D.

I shall fold for the moment, and get this to the office, and then track down Mr. Brew and so commune with you through your reports.....

Dinner at self's is always good, and there is a constant additional feature, namely from what one eats, what one thinks. I am forever making an effort to eat and think alike, which is a most commendable aim, and I am sure that I am the only one present to whom it is not a mere phrase. I am sure that I am the only one present to whom it is not a mere phrase. I am sure that I am the only one present to whom it is not a mere phrase.

1500

November 21st, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I find it so hard to say No, and especially when the suggestion seems so modest. And yet here I find myself confronted with an expressed wish which I fear I cannot possibly accede to, - the presence of at least one tiny mimosa in the gardens of Arentbourg.

It will perhaps seem to be crawling out of something which I should feel bound to perform, and yet I pray you to sympathize with me in this matter, and when I have explained, - or tried to explain, you will perhaps understand in part why I must say No to your wish for one tiny mimosa.

To come directly to the point: - A tiny mimosa, - there just ain't no such animal in Louisiana.

For in these rich river bottoms, the mimosa flourishes with abandon. On occasion, where too many find trees have been planted as seedlings and then have come into maturity, I have wielded the axe mightily and cut enormous mimosas to the ground. Figuratively, I have gone on about my business of destitution, and subsequently returned shortly afterward when lo! the mimosa would be putting out sprouts madly, and growing again for all it was worth, - and they are worth something, I must say, for they are lovely, and especially in the spring.

The point I am trying to make, but seem to be floundering around about is the fact that the mimosa does elegantly in these parts, and you shall have as fine a mimosa as one will ever run across in all of Louisiana, - if I have any influence with old Mother Nature.

After posting my letter to you this morning, I caught up with Mr. Brew, and we returned to this house, and I read your letters, - and DonaDera's.

Immediately I concerned myself with the mimosa situation, doing some telephoning and some traveling up and down the river. I have located a fine specimen, - and if it isn't too large for successful transplanting, it will be the first item, - your tree, that will be at the head of the development of the Arentbourg gardens. The one I have located is about 8 or 10 feet in height, and its roots will be quite extensive, but I am going to try to move the thing, even though it may require half a dozen tractors, and if the season is right and the elements favor, we shall have a fine mimosa growing before you know it, and probably within a year it will be a tree. - No, we can't have just a tiny little mimosa, but I'll bet you'll be tickled with the elegant big old one that will bloom at Arentbourg just for you, and mine....

1501

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It was kind of you to mention the Rojankovsky item again. Frankly I have been rather hesitant about accepting your kind offer, - there is such a continuous line of requests I am asking from you. But I honestly would be enchanted if you could find one for Brother, - the simplest the better, and I have a feeling it would be something he would treasure mightily. If he wouldn't let Beulah or Estelle so much as look at my shoes which he had taken home to show me, I can't imagine how he will cling to a book, such as you mention, - one that is his very own. It was so good of you to mention it a second time, and on Brother's behalf and my own, I say Yes, with no end of appreciation.

You mention the return of the Lake letter, with the letter referring to the St. Amand volumes, which I asked about subsequently. The Lake letter came to hand safely, - as did la Parlange's in today's post, but in the case of the Lake letter, I can only explain my failure to recall the St. Amand reference to the fact that possibly some unusual interruption may have impelled Mr. Brew to skip a line or a paragraph, - and that seems most unlikely, but in such instances one casts about for anything, regardless of its improbability.

It puts me in mind of the rose bush I planted in front of the big white house one latest Saturday afternoon last Spring. The Madam saw me planting it from the upper gallery, so both of us were assured that I just didn't dream about getting the thing in the ground. It was fairly large and wrapped up in a big old burlap sack, which one always plants along with the item. But the next day or so, I made a round to see how the thing was doing and couldn't find it. The Madam came out on the gallery and pointed the place out to me, - where I had set it out. But she couldn't see it, either. Then a couple of gardeners were set to work, spading around to find the burlap that had enclosed the roots, but to no avail. From that day to this, we never have been able to explain what happened to the rosetush, the burlap, - or even the place where I had set it out, - for not even did the ground about the locality seemed disturbed. Strange business, as I would remark to Dora.

And thanks for telling me about the impending decision of the Nobel Prize award for literature. I hadn't heard the tentative list of possibilities, and it will be interesting to see how they come out. I think Romaine won the award once, - or am I thinking of the Goncourt award. I don't know if the Nobel award has ever been given to the same person a second time, although it seems to me the Goncourt prize has been twice awarded to the same individual on several occasions. I think little Marcel Proust received it twice, - 1913 and 1919, or some such, - but I myself feel that a prize is awarded in recognition of merit in writing, and accordingly should be extended but once to a single individual. After all, one passport into Heaven ought to be sufficient, I should think.

Oh, yes, and while I think of it, - you ask concerning the status of my "wreck", and I am delighted to report that once I received the thing, I just adjusted it to the place for which it was intended and went ahead just as though nothing had ever happened. There is a vague suspicion that one more item may have to be added to the three constituting the outfit, but it will be time enough to worry about that when the occasion demands.

1502

There was a brief note from la belle Essae Mae in yesterday's post. She reported not going to Dallas, and remarked that it was too bad that Lyle's book had again been postponed, - this time until December. I couldn't imagine what she meant, unless the publishers for some reason are holding up distribution, for obviously the thing is but definitely in print.

She said she was going to New Orleans this week and would contact him while there. Charles Mazurette, currently in the Crescent City, said in a letter the day before that he was seeing Lyle on Monday, - I believe Charles' letter was penned on Sunday, and that he would let us know how he found him. You may be sure, under the circumstances, that will be a guarded letter.

I must get off a line to Dora today, too, since there are several little points I want to cover. I have for some time thought of giving Clemence a Show at Matchez, and can readily find enthusiasts, either on our side or in the Pilgrimage Garden branch. Roane would beat the drum for the Garden Club, and Miss Myra would do as much for the Pilgrimage crowd, I think. It would be nice if the thing could be arranged during Pilgrimage time, but I shall have to study that one out, so as to be sure it is placed most advantageously. Obviously out of towners would be more enthusiastic than local big wigs, who, for the most part, would be living too close to the color line to appreciate anything save the color of the artist, - and not the coloring of the Art.

There was some other point I wanted to touch upon, but I shall have to let it go for the moment. It is so kind of you to express so much enthusiasm for the details and perspectives in view for our little Tiranon. I am so glad you like the way they seem to be taking form, and may some of the plans begin to take on shape shortly. I know all of the Henrys are going to fall out when they learn I am stirring up some kind of a puddle between the Bermuda Road and Arenbourg, for what with all of Cane River running slap in front of the place, it really would seem, - to them, - that there was ample water about the place. But I think water will make a charming setting for the little moulins we plan to build eventually, and some of the things we plan to plant will thrive more vastly, what with the proximity of additional moisture.

I think we ought to have about one Chinese magnolia for February, and a few pear trees for March, their white blossoms making a nice succession or contrast with the pink of the Chinese magnolias. And then in April, - eventually, the grandiflora will begin blooming, and in May your "tiny" mimosa. In June the yellow roses should move in, and July will see the butterfly lilies inaugurate their six month's season. In August the cannas should take over, and so on throughout the season, but I am taking up too much of your time with all this, and so I shall break off at this point.....

1204

1503

November 22nd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service: 38-6666-1000

I like the idea of Thanksgiving Day.

I'm not very sure about its inception, but I think it is generally attributed to the Pilgrim Fathers. In a lot of ways, they were tags, but as has been before remarked by someone or other: "There is so much bad in the best of us, and so much good in the worst....."

And one of the nice things about the old fellows, I think, was this idea of setting aside a day wherein we may pause between the turkey dinner and the turkey sandwich supper, to take a little stock of some of our blessings and publicly or privately praise God for our blessings.

And how many blessings do I have to count this year, and yet curiously enough God seems to have set a pivotal point around which they seem to swing, - someone who somehow radiates the promise of so many blessings in the form of dreams that are to be realized. I don't much go in for public prayers, feeling so often that they are for the most part pretty much between the individual and God, but I don't mind confessing to you that I am filled with thanksgiving to my Creator because there is someone in the world who knows what I am talking about and who shares my feelings and enthusiasms for the morrow with me.

The enclosed circular letter is of not much interest, I presume, although I haven't read it, but I thought you would be interested in seeing the map. You will notice that we get in it, since we are on La Cote Joyeuse at Arenbourg.

This particular association, I believe, is some kind of a political thing that by some wild stretch of the imagination, thinks it can put the home towns of the interested parties on the great Washington to Mexico City trace. It is sponsored by a flock of unknowns in Colfax and Plack, - which are much too far South of the original old Satchez trace to have any claim to being on the new trace, calculated to approximate the old one. But there may be something of interest in the thing, and so I send it along.

There wasn't much mail today, only 2nd class things, and if I may say so, it is interesting that Nadine hasn't responded to my original letter to her. But I am not impatient about

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receiving one. After all, I have established the fact that I feel sorry for her, and have no rancor about by-gones, and that is all I cared to do.

Dan came home from Camp Polk about 4:30 yesterday afternoon, and as Pat was expected from Baton Rouge about 9 last night, I suppose he is here too. We have not heard from the Cloutierville people this week, but the Madam half assumes that they will be here in force today, with much turkey and all that. If they do come, the Madam will dine with them. If they do not come, she will join (interruption) - she will join the rest of us at Celeste's.

I tuned in on la Genet, broadcasting from Rome about UNRA, but after the first minute or so, no matter how I bent my ear, the voice just faded away, even as it did last week, and I ended up no wiser but with one slightly dislocated ear-drum. I certainly wish that lady would get on a wave length that would come through a little better.

This morning Sam Peace is in the kitchen, trying to stir up some breakfast for the household, - the Madam, Dan, Pat and Eugene Latespere. Bill Hocque, nephew of Madam Aubin, and brother-in-law of Mitchely the Axe, brought me some coffee. He says that some of the folks, mixed up in the Saturday night fracas, are heading out for town this morning, - responding to a call from the Sheriff. Bill Hocque is deaf-deaf, and always answers astonishingly irrelevantly to questions shouted at him. This morning he volunteered the information that once he had had to go to see the Sheriff, and that 12 men of the law kept on asking questions and I didn't know what I was a-sayin', but one thing I do know my foot was a-tappin' on the floor, just like a telegram.

So there you have it, one aspect of Melrose on Thanksgiving Day of 1945, with a brilliant sun outside, and a frosty morning that impelled my scholar this morning to take off his shoe immediately upon his arrival and place his bare feet close to the yellow flames that shot upward in my chimney.

But the hour is running late and the postman will make an early round this morning, since he will only have to drive directly here from Bermuda to drop the mail and pick up the out-going, since on holidays, he does not have to deliver mail to the individual postboxes along the route.

I failed to hear this morning's weather report from New York, - an item which I usually listen for, since I like to picture how the weather is in your neighborhood. But I am hoping the day is fine, and no matter how it is, I am hoping that it will hold a heap of moments of satisfaction for you. And while today is a special one for the giving of thanks, I shall set a portion of it aside for just that purpose, but I have a feeling that a little slice of every day through every year has a little bit of thanksgiving in it for me, thanks to you and to God.....

1505

1505

November 23rd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The enclosure, I think, is of no special interest, but I thought you might be interested in the mention of the Dormon doings and the reaction from Shreveport of one Kane.

Thanksgiving went off very nicely in these parts. It was crisp and clear, but sufficiently mild for the Madam to walk from the big house over to Celeste's to have dinner there with J. H., Dan, Pat, Celeste, Eugene Latespere, me and the Madam herself in that order.

In the afternoon, the boys all went to town, the Madam to her room again and Eugene to his plantation job, while I took to the road to see how Aurelia might be doing. I found her up and about, but still with something of a cold. Her sister, who reminds me of a knome or is it gnome, - I was thinking of the "K" in Knipmayer, - was attending Aurelia, and their little mother, who is slightly but mildly bats in the upper story was inside the house until I arrived. Then she stepped out on to the gallery, where she walked up and down, mumbling all the time to herself, and sometimes stopping to peer in the six inch opening of the door which stood slightly ajar. Curious household and curious people, and I came away, wondering how these people, - some people call them Mexicans, but Uncle Sam classes them as white, ever came down from the hills of Gorham, - west of Derry, - and took up life in the river bottoms. I guess Aurelia will be back on the job about Saturday.

It being Thursday, and regardless of the holiday, Dr. Knipmayer called as usual about 10:30. He said he realized few if any of his patients would realize that today was a holiday, - that is Thursday, and accordingly he would not want them set to worrying for fear he had forgotten them. I like his general disposition toward them.

Just before coming to see us, he had been on the other side of Cane River to call on Agalize Sarpi, and as he returned, he stopped for a moment to talk with several negroes standing on the bridge. He asked them if they weren't going to have a new bridge when they put the new highway in from Montrose to Melrose. They thought so. He asked them if the new bridge is to be in the same place. (I would like to know, too, so I could pass along the word as to what we shall or shall not see from the terrace at Arenbourg). They said they didn't know, but that Mr. J. H. could tell him.

1506

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because Mr. J. H. is the Governor of Cane River and he always gets everything just the way he wants it. I told that one at the dinner table, and the boys loved it, - especially Dan, who had much to say about the point.

I also heard something of interest at table. It seems that when Drew Pierson made a couple of scathing remarks about the General recently, the Secretary of War wrote the commentator quite a sharp letter, declaring that the job Stephen had done was of the utmost value and that if a retraction were not made, a suit for libel on the part of the Department, I believe, would be instituted immediately. The retraction was forthcoming without delay.

As I was returning from Aurelia's, - she lives down the lane, leading toward Little River, I had nearly reached home when Celeste came along in her car and asked me to ride down to Magnolia with her. I readily accepted, and the more so because I saw she had her camera with her. There are two horse operated or rather horse hower sugar grinding mills between Magnolia and Berry, slap on the banks of Cane River. I wanted to get a couple of shots of them in operation, and the day was fair. We got them, and I shall send them along when they come to hand wit in a week or so. The children were operating one mill, powered by a single mule, while some darkies who were grown-ups, were operating the other, with two mules attached. The boiling process was going on in a small cabin, rigged up, as the darkies say, for that purpose. The most fascinating thing about the latter building was a perfectly lovely round chimney made of mud. If only Miss Ramsey, scheduled for November 16th, would come. One of those pictures, such as she takes, would be so nice for the Little Cane River article.

No word from her, however, and so one just waits. I think I shall send her a hurry up on the sugar, however, even though it looks as though we have definitely lost much chance at further cotton ginning processes this season.

On Thanksgiving morning even less servan's showed up than usual, but eventually some coffee and breakfast of sorts appeared. It was brought by Bill Roque, and as I write that name, I realize I must have told you about his fright at being taken to court to testify, whereat, in explaining his nervousness to me, I think I told you he said: "I was so scared I didn't knowed what I was a-sayin", but my foots kept a-tappin' on the floor jus' like a telegram."

You see I am getting childish or ancient or something, thus repeating myself, but you will forgive me for this time....

1507

1507

November 24th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

And so, as was to be expected, the Thanksgiving week end has brought its usual round of road runners, and yesterday, being Friday, there was a goodly number of pilgrims passing this way, - the greater number being Texas people, en route to Natchez, Miss.

And then, in the morning, there was official Washington. The United States Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, a Mr. Brannon, came by about 10. His coming had been heralded a day or two in advance. He traveled with retainers to the number of 6 or 8 men, and while his primary purpose for being in this neighborhood was to take a gander at the drainage situation in these parts, he couldn't resist a tour of Helrose and the gardens, and J. H. asked me to assist. There were perhaps six of the visitors who were interested in the place, and the balance interested in gathering pecanec from trees growing in the gardens. These pecanec gatherers must have lost their minds when they reached the pecanec groves between here and Little River, for poaching should have been really good out there.

Between the arrival and departure, or perhaps the other way around, of pilgrims, I passed by the gin, which is about finished so far as this year's cotton crop goes. Already I notice cows browsing around in the edges of some fields, and it won't take them long to finish up the remaining 50 or 100 bales. I'm afraid little Miss Ramsey will never make it for this year's harvest.

While returning from the gin, I was sought out by King Hunter, who told me his mama would like to see me after dark, if I could make it. I could.

And so along about 8 p.m., I headed down the road toward Clemence's. It was a moonless night with a myriad of stars, the air crisp, and only an occasional sliver of light slanting out from closed shutters to indicate the occasional cabin.

At Clemence's it was cozy enough. Yank had already folded up for the night, an ebony head resting on a white-white pillow of the bed in the far corner. Grouped about the cheery blaze of the fire place sat Clemence, Jackie and I. Mary France and Winnie May shifted and played at making a doll house on each side of the fire place, until Clemence told them it was time to go to bed, - and they just went, - into the middle room where your curtains add a decorative note to the setting. I guess Junior must have already folded up before I arrived.

1508

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They talked at length of Saturday night's doings down the road, and some of the expressions were wonderful. It is interesting that in these parts, the negroes never use the word "stab". It is always "staub" or "stob", - I wouldn't know just how to spell it. And they use the same word in two different meanings. One, of course, is to mean the cutting or the stabbing of a person with a knife. While the other meaning is for a small stake or stick, set in the ground. Well, anyway, Clyde Claude Emmett Davis is slowly recovering from Saturday night's "stobbing", and on Thursday, when Clemence and Jackie were at the hospital, the doctor tried to take a sample of Clyde's blood for an arterie, but after the incision was made, only air came from the tube, so "he ain't all that well yit".

interruption, - wherein Brother has had his lesson.

And so after a pretty good round regarding local doings, Clemence got down to her reason for asking me to drop by.

I had thought it was in reference to the receipt of the application blank from old Mr. Rosenwald, but I was wrong.

What she wanted to tell me was that she had been contacting Regis Metoye's mama, and that the latter wanted to see me alone one day this coming week. Could I do that. I could.

You may recall that a few months back, the subject of that lady's property was so matter of some correspondence between Dora and me. The holding comprises some 14 odd acres, lying directly to the south of the Spillway bayou, and I think it is indicated on the map which you and I consult from time to time. It has some pasture land, some acres that are cultivated, and a whole flock of pecane trees. I think I told you that Mr. Bachelier thought the parcel an excellent investment, figuring that normally, the pecanes alone should bring at least \$200. per year, and probably about \$400. The tilable acres could be rented, and the balance of the section could be rented as a camp, - for there is a fairly good house.

It seems that the children of Regis' mama have long wanted her to sell the property, since none of them live in the Melorse neighborhood, - one or two daughters living in Shreveport, Regis in Bayou Natchez, La., and another son in California. The latter wants his mama to go to California to live with him.

1509

As near as I can make out, the reason why she wants to sell to me is because she doubts that she would get anything from the adjacent property holders, since the latter, if they feign indifference, feel that sooner or later, - and they can afford to wait, the property will drop automatically into their laps like a ripened plum.

I know not what figure the lady is asking, but I know what she hopes to get a couple of years ago, and Mr. Bachelier found that that price was so low that a profit could be realized immediately if one wished to re-sell to anyone other than the adjacent land holders, - x to someone, for instance, like a Texas or Louisiana enthusiast of the Cane River country.

Then there is also the fact that Dora has long since cast eyes of yearning at this segment of the old Metoye holdings.

At this writing, I am quite on the fence as to the wisdom of doing anything about the piece. I think Mr. Bachelier would be glad to supply the money, and in the event I should find no purchaser, and found that I could not hold it, he could take it over, with no loss at all to me.

You see the point about all this Cane River property through this region is that no outsider can get a toe-hold any place. The major portion of the holdings are in the hands of the big holders, - the Prudhommes, Jones, Hertzogs, Henrys, etc, while the little holders do not want to sell an acre, and never do until they have become so involved financially with their big neighbors that they never have a chance to dispose of the little holdings until said holdings have actually dissolved beneath their very feet.

That is why the rare opportunity of obtaining a section of property on Cane River is snatched at so readily whenever a piece, - or even before a piece, appears on the market.

The present instance, for example, is a case in point, where the owner prefers to deal with someone well known in the community rather than putting the thing up for sale at public sale. I suppose if ever such a move has been made, the owner has been done out of a large section of his profit by the mysterious doings of the real estate operator who has handled the matter.

Now there is another consideration, too, that I must give some thought to, - what will be the reaction of the Henrys who have long waited for adding this tiny parcel of ground to their large acreages? Under the circumstances, it would be fooling to excite their envy, and that, of course, I shall not do. But I would be foolish to let such an opportunity go by, in the event there is a determination on the part of the present owner to dispose of the property to someone other than the Henrys, who own the land adjacent to the south of the strip, - where Clemence lives, - or to the Kaffy's, who own the land to the north of the bayou.

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I am glad I know that J. H. is threatening to go to South America, for in the event he does, the transaction might be consummated during his absence. That would be more or less non-disturbing, I could imagine, and so accomplished without a personal ripple between us.

Once in possession of the property, I could offer it as a trading point for a little large slice to be added to Arentbourg, or I could offer it to Dora who certainly would like it but who may not have any money to swing the thing, or I could divide the thing, cutting off an acre or two, reserving that for a camp site and residence, and selling the balance to the Henrys, - or even to Mr. Bachellier.

I apologize for giving you such a long and involved account of this proposition, - even before I know anything as to the price involved, etc., etc., - and yet I feel that you are not averse to sharing these little foundations for Arentbourg, and I want to present all angles, so that you may the better understand the various considerations when I may sometime appear like a tight-rope artist in negotiating some of these personal matters with those who are bound to be our immediate neighbors in the years to come.

In the mean time, - I shall say nothing of any of this to Dora until some final business has been taken care of.

I think you will agree with me that it is just as well not to dangle the Spillway Bayou before him until, after something definite is known about what is going to happen to it.

In the mean time, if you have anything you want to say about any of these doings, you might refer to the Spillway Bayou property as the Hunter Holdings, and that will keep Mr. Brew in the dark.

Frankly I should be delighted to have Dora set up business in the "Hunter Holdings", for that would make him a neighbor with but a mile between us, and a very pleasant walk. And yet the original foundation for Cane River residence for all of us must first be considered, and from a financial viewpoint, would it be better to have his share of the up-keep expended on Arentbourg rather than dissipated in a separate establishment. I am inclined to think it is better to garner all income for the benefit of Arentbourg, - but in the event some income should develop that would enable us to maintain Arentbourg separate from the Hunter Holdings, that, of course, would be perfectly grand for all concerned, - the separate establishments. Next week Regis' mama will be here and I shall confer at length with her, and then we shall see what we shall see. In the mean time, if you will pardon me, I shall discuss my thoughts on this possibility with you at length.....

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November 25th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

So many things to talk about, I know exactly what I want to say first.

Your nice letter came to hand in Saturday's post, and I held it, along with the two enclosed from Dora, until this morning, when Mr. Brew came by for a quick "look-see". I had but time to read the letters, and accordingly I shall enjoy your enclosure on the Jugel Mansion tomorrow, when I shall also look at the Brownwood clippings of the Hunter Show, and then I shall send the latter along to you.

I am deeply appreciative of the sweet things you had to say in finding me in the Lux Radio program, and by curious coincidence, I equally found you there too. It was a pleasant sensation, altogether pleasant, and I shall not enjoy another performance half so much again until they re-broadcast it, which, with all my heart, I wish they would do.

I am sorry that things piled up so mightily on you as of Friday, the second last past, and again I urge you not to write when such a situation develops. Your own good health must come before the pleasures of correspondence, and whenever I know about such circumstances in advance or not, you will always realize that I will understand the reasons for the silence.

The enclosures concerning Clemence and the reference to Miss Cole and the interest of Mr. De Mille in eventually doing a Natchez thing sounds as though the man who used to supervise the Lux Radio is on the right track. I must write Dora a line, making a few suggestions in regard to PRIDE WITHOUT PILARS, especially in view of the fact that Mr. De Mille no doubt wants to make use of every pillar in Adams County when he gets ready to dust off ante bellum Natchez.

As I write those lines, it occurs to me that some up-to-the-minute producer might well use Mrs. Moore's career, to illustrate how the patriotic grandmother re-orientates herself in civilian life, after years at being a WAC, somehow infiltrating the glamour of old Natchez into the picture, perhaps by having her turn out to be a great and successful public lecturer, her pinnacle of mid 1945-1950 success being the figure around which audiences the nation over hails between acts of her illustrated account in costume of Natchez in the old days. Thus the contemporary

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scene would be intimately mingled with the past, and you could have an up to the minute subject, not unlike **VALIANT IS THE WORD FOR CARRIE**, with some actress of considerable talent playing not only the role of Mrs. Moore but also the heroine in the various ante bellum stories which the veteran of the 1940 - 1945 war unfolds to her audience, revolving about the eminent role women played in the history of old Natchez. How does that idea sound? Well, good or bad, I guess it wouldn't make much difference, unless some personal contact should throw one into personal contact with Hollywood, which seems not too likely at the moment.

I listened to Invitation to Learning this morning, - Landor's Historical Conversations being the subject. I like it, and the thing was good because it made me want to read Landor. But somehow the half hour reminded me of a table heaped with marvelous pastries, - with everything said being so heady that it almost constituted that very 18th century quality which some people complain about. Perhaps one of the lines I thought especially good was this one:

"He was not a great thinker, but a man of great thoughts."

There is the key, I think, and admirably expressed, which explains much in the relations of certain white people of some cultivation to certain untutored people of the darker race. So far as formal training goes, the lowliest of the negroes may be far from great as thinkers, but how often, - so much more often than with half baked white people, do negroes manifest themselves as thinkers of great thoughts, - and how often, too, are they entirely unmindful of that very wonderful fact.

In view of today's enclosures, I had better keep this report down to a single page

My old friend, Archillius Brown, aged 66, dropped by to see me and to listen to Invitation to Learning. Following the program, we fell to talking about contemporary aspects of education and the differences between it and the days when he was a boy. A conservative darkie, he expressed his regret at girls being permitted to participate in many of the more rugged sports with the boys. It seems that he was passing the Ro enwald school on Little River during recess time, when the bigger boys and girls were playing out of doors basket ball. At that moment one of the larger girls sprawled on the ground. Said Archillius:

"Right there she took on the attitude of an umbrella, - everything she had that counted went slap over her head."

Obviously pedagogy should look to bigger and better parasols.....

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November 27th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The postman was grand but the reader got lost!

Yesterday's mail brought two copies of Life which I am positive came from the Service and at the same time arrived a smaller parcel containing four elegant rolls of film which is going to stand me in good stead in recording the sugar industry, now in full swing, and some impending business at Arentbourg. May I bless you for all?

In turning through the copies of Life, I have marked several things I want to know about further, when my reader comes to hand, but just looking at the beautiful color pages of autumn scenes is sufficient to make my heart glad. The pictures of the English country houses, too, delights me, and one, at least, I think I recognize as Hatfield House, which is altogether delightful because of itself and how many little tricks one could do to the architecture to make it take on all kinds of shapes. And then there is the Fleet in New York and the Eclipse of the Sun in colors and so on without end. I am having fun without the aid of readers but will have it all over again when one turns up.

There was also a letter from Mary Rhodes, but that will have to wait a later reading when there is less doing at the gin.

There were a number of letters for the Madam, - one or two of which I enjoyed reading with her. The General was asked to take pen in hand once more and is scheduled to be up and doing by January 9th, according to the experts.

There was a letter from Miss Culver's secretary, Deborah Abramson, who is a Baton Rouge number, Lyle's age and has known him all her life. She says she has read the first 50 pages of Gumbo Ya-Ya and is greatly disappointed.

There was also a letter from Charles Mazurette, from New Orleans, saying he had seen Lyle a few days ago, - and that he has also seen Gumbo Ya-Ya and will not spend five dollars for it. As for Lyle's situation, Charles says that he found him in good spirits. I don't know if spirits meant something of an alcoholic tinge or not. He said there were lots of people there and that he accordingly did not stay as long as he

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might have otherwise. He further said that Joe Gilmore confided to him that Lyle had fallen off the wagon while in Dallas. That is disappointing but not at all a surprise, I must say. The line about falling off the wagon suggested that there was something to the remark that he had found him in good spirits. I certainly hope he doesn't pass this way to celebrate the holidays in such an old role, for it would certainly put a crimp in things generally, so far as my friends go.

On the gayer side of life, I have heard nothing that quite compares with the young lady who struck "the attitude of an umbrella", but one little detail about another circumstance did somehow suggest a mental picture of a sepia Grapes of Wrath. Big King Solomon, papa of the twins, Little King and James, drove to Melrose from Los Angeles last week in an old Ford, - it being just a social visit after about 8 or 10 years. I think I told you that Mrs. Solomon, - Zelma, had subsequently married Puny, and that King Solomon had re-married, having taken the mother of Lotus and Dolly Dee as his new spouse, after parting from Zelma. Well, anyway, the twins were delighted to see their papa, and he remained a week in these parts, calling on old friends, and looking up the twins' older brother, Henry Earle Solomon, who is a dreadful boy of 19 summers.

Yesterday in his old Ford, King Solomon started back to his home in California. One of the twins, - now about 15, told me that he took other company with him aside from Henry Earle, - the party being made up of three other grown folks and five children, - 10 niggers in a broken down Ford heading out for the city of the Angels.

In coming East, King Solomon drove straight through, different companions driving the car when King was too exhausted. A mental picture of the old Ford, chugging through the waste lands of Arizona and New Mexico, not to mention the far reaches of Texas, - and especially through the long hours of the night, is really something to conjure up. At least they all ought to keep warm, I should imagine, although I should imagine they would all be so cramped up that they might readily fold up whenever circumstances caused them to halt temporarily from time to time to accommodate the children and all.

The static last night was so intense that I gave up trying to hear anything on the air, and so this week's Lux Radio slipped by, but I didn't care much, since I knew none of the participants, and I don't care much about race horse shows. I am so glad that last week's reception was so perfect and that we both could share it together.

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Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The enclosure is from one point of view not at all interesting, - that is, from its contents, but it does hold one unique place in yesterday's post, - it was the single, solitary item coming to hand. The old Congressional Record which no one ever reads, never fails, - until yesterday, when only the note from Miss Robina came through.

Among the obvious remarks that I scarcely need make is the fact that if I don't round up Mr. Brew to read a couple of things for me, - and to put a new ribbon on this machine, out-going correspondence is likely to be just as thin as today's in-coming, - or more so.

The new cook, I am pleased to report, seemed to be dandy. She is 35-ish, and her name is Wynita Mack, and her husband is A. C. Mack, and her little girl is Emilee and her boy is W. Y. C. The children, instead of attending St. Mathews School, go to St. Augustine's School, on the Little River. Wynita is tall and rather on the slim side, black as the Ace of Spades and withal good natured. She smiles easily and seems to have a plenty of sense, and so many virtues all rolled into one cook is really unusual, and especially in these times.

On Monday, Brother didn't make it for school time, for he had a bad cold, so his papa told me, but Brother made it on Tuesday morning, even though his cold was vermy much with him. He was shivering when he knocked at the door, but a cup of hot chocolate and a nice warm fire got him thawed out and we just ran through a couple of Bible verses and called it a day. I am glad to say that in practicing his little verses, Brother seems to strive to remember the meaning rather than the actual jingle, which is better sense than the other way around, although things sometimes do end up a little different than expected.

Saturday he undertook

"Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take."

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Brother does it this way:

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord He don't turn it loose!

"Amen, Brother", is what I say, and Brother gets on
about his business.

Last Saturday afternoon, I took a flyer into the planting
of magnolia seeds; - magnolia grandiflora. From Kew Gardens
in England, we learned that to get them to germinate in non-
acid soil, - and that is what Cane River soil is, one does
well to soak the seed over night in a lye solution. I
accordingly soaked a heap of them in water in which wood ashes
had been properly combined. It is astonishing how much grease
formed around the sides of the pan in which the seeds were
soaked. Just for fun, I counted the seeds when planting them, -
738, to be exact. I thought if one-seventh or one-fourteenth
germinated, there would be an abundance. And it certainly
would, but none of them ever will, for when I returned from
the store this morning early, a whole flock of chickens had
found the nice fresh soil in the box-bed I had planted to
mightily, and lo! not a magnolia seed was left. I have a
new batch of seed soaking at the moment, and I shall
try my hand at planting again and blunderbussing the
poultry if they stage another raid.

And speaking of magnolias suggests perfume, and
that reminds me that last night we caught a huge old
pole cat just beyond the gallery where I am writing at this
moment. He did all that is to be expected of a skunk, and
in consequence, all of Araby combined as no scent that
could compare.

I reckon I shall have to break off at this point.
To my surprise, Brother has returned, after having left
here some time back. He asks me if I would mind passing
him by the Brimmers, which means to go with him beyond where
two Brahmin bulls are loitering in the road. I know
that George is one of the two, and George is a nice
fellow and before we get by, Brother will be scratching
George's ear, - if he can reach that high, and traveling
on down the road with a big old story to tell Clemence
when he passes her house.....

How I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord He don't turn it loose.

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November 29th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

The enclosures are not of especial interest, I think.

The hilarious one, and "Klotsch-tosse-ish" Lady Lake
number speaks for itself. I sent it along to Dora, in order
that he might have it while the Fort Worth Show is in progress,
thinking it might suggest something that he might write that la
bag would want to copy for the newspapers or magazines she
does business with, thus providing additional material for
the application to be submitted to old Rosenwald, - although
no application blank has ever come to hand.

I think you know that we are using the Cinderella and
Mrs. Rembrandt interchangeably, so that the reader is
readily thrown off the track.

Parenthetically, Little King read this letter from
Dora to me, as I have not seen Mr. Brew since Sunday.
I understand Mr. Brew has been driving a truck every day
this week, so that I don't catch up with him easily. The
crop is supposed to be finished this week, however, and then
Mr. Brew will have time on his hands, - I hope.

I never have read the Lake letter completely, but
think it is of little interest, and so I don't care about
having it back.

The reference on Dora's part to the friends who came
from Tulsa and after viewing the pictures, scouted the idea
that since they have friends in the Art Department of the
Normal, they may drive down to visit them, and will come out
this way to visit the artist. Now that is rather hilarious
in its possibilities.

At the Normal, - now styled North Western Louisiana College
there are a number of people in the Art Department, including
the sisters Bertha and Hope Haupt. Should they be the friends
of the people from Tulsa, a lot of things could eventuate.
Not the least interesting, - aside from the fact that the Haupt
(s) might bring their friends to see the Madam, is the fact
that the sisters Haupt frequently spend week-ends at the
Kaffy Camp, which is situated on the point of land precisely

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at the junction of Cane River and the Spillway bayou, - the North side. Across the Spillway lives Jackie, Clemence's daughter, - and a couple of houses down the road, as you know, from the Spillway, lives the girl friend herself.

Quite often, when marching down the road to see Clemence, I encounter the sisters Haupt, standing on the spillway bridge, and I stop and pass a brief time of day with them. Little do they suspect, and great will be their surprise, if the Tulsa numbers turn out to be their friends, and they learn for the first time in their lives that many a time Clemence has been slap on the same Spillway bridge fishing while they have been standing there as close to her as I am to this typewriter. I must remark upon that possibility to Dora.

An item for Arentbourg is in the making. - a quilt. I think you will like it, - if and when it is ever done.

Clif Byrd made the pattern a number of years ago, - it is the big house at Melrose, with some trees and whatnot in the background, and Cane River flowing by in the foreground, or at what will eventually be the foot of the thing.

He sketched it out on huge sheets of brown paper, and cut out all the pieces, some of which, I fear, may have been lost, but that doesn't matter so much.

One will sew the pieces of cloth slap on to the pattern, and when the whole business has been completed, the paper will be torn off, and there will be an extraordinary item. Clemence saw the pattern this morning, - rescued from some forgotten catin, the Wehving room, or some such, and naturally she is leaping to undertake it. She would be. But she wants Clif to come down to show her where to start and then she will go ahead full tilt. The madam has already observed that it should be a number over the project currently contemplated, and I am all in favor, naturally.

The Natchez paper to hand today says that one Barnett Kane was a distinguished guest in Natchez of Mrs. Balfour Miller last week. He is in the right company, and naturally I was enchanted that it was la Miller of the Pilgrimage set and not Roan or Miss Myra.

There was a funeral at St. Mathew's today, - Gabe Collins, father of Willie Collins, of whom I must speak in another sitting. Gabe went to Alexandria to see Willie and was killed by a car at a street crossing. The latest word from Clyde Claude Emmett Davis is is that "he don't laugh no more and he don't hardly open his eyes to look at you", - but I think, - I hope, he is going to make it. Much more to talk about but no time at the moment....

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Memorandum to Clipping Service:

If you are pressed for time, or if this ribbon is so faint, you can't make out the writing readily, just skip the whole thing, and you will have missed little or nothing, for nothing of importance is at hand to report.

Yesterday, being Thursday, was Dr. Knipmayer day, and he arrived on schedule, with his wife, and we chatted for a half hour.

The latest news on Cote Joyeuse has to do with nephews of Lestan Prudhomme, the lamented diarist. It seems the two of them, now middle aged, and old enough to have more sense, haven't been speaking to each other for years, although they live on the same place. Their sister, a Mrs. Keator, gives breakfast, and dinner and supper to one of them, and then takes the meal to where ever the brother is staying near by. The boys names are Lestan and Placide Prudhomme. The family familiarly calls them Let and Peck. Imagine turning Placide into an old Peck.

Dr. Knipmayer said that Peter Metoyer fainted away in town last Saturday. He says he isn't well and should not ever attempt to work again. Thank the Lord he has three stalwart sons. There is talk that they are moving to Alexandria, and at the same time that J. H. is going to build them a house across the road from Arentbourg. I doubt the latter rumor, but one never knows, but it doesn't matter either way, just so long as they move.

Eugabour came to see me yesterday. He is anxious to get his tractor and with Ezra, start leveling the terrace and diggin our lake. I am hoping that J. H. will hurry up and go to South America so we can finish the thing completely so that no interruptions will come along, as well as they might, and should J. H. be about and think of pulling a duck out of a bayou or some such.

In a round about way comes news from Clyde Claude Emmett Davis. His chances are about 50 - 50. He will never be much good for anything but the lightest type of work. It also turns out that Sam Brown went to see him in the hospital, and in Alexandria, carrying some money with him. His purpose was to bribe Clyde Claude to swear in Court that Roberta Brown was not the person who stabbed him. Slick fellow, that Sam Brown, but Clyde Claude gasped No, and Sam Brown came away without having accomplished his purpose....

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I thought of you and your request for "one tiny mimosa" yesterday when I visited a little neck of land in the river between the bridge and the Melrose store, rather behind Fugaton's house. The Madam planted that region perhaps 15 years ago with hundreds of rare and expensive things, - and then went off and forgot about the place. Last year I spent some time there, trying to cut through the jungle of growth that had sprung up. It was a crime the way we had to slash down fine trees, in order that perhaps 50 could survive where hundreds had been planted. Among other things which had fallen under the axe were several mimosas. During the summer they had put out at the roots, and now they present a most wonderful appearance, great sprays radiating from the trunk, at a 45 degree angle, and looking precisely like a great circular fountain, each spray being perhaps 15 or 20 feet in length.

The price mimosa which has been marked for Arentbourg and you will never present such a spectacle, for it will never be mutilated in such a manner. I may or may merely have intended to tell you that I have located a fine specimen for Arentbourg, - a good healthy looking plant about 6 or 8 feet tall, and it goes without saying that it will be planted at Arentbourg just as soon as the tractors are finished with their jobs. At first I had in mind to plant it near the entrance, but on second thought I think that would be unwise, for there are telephone wires along the highway, some 20 feet high, and the "tiny" mimosa would take them in its stride before we knew it, - for the linemen would be whacking away at it before we could catch up with them, and so we shall seek out some other advantageous spot.

Oh, yes, while I think of it, I must tell you that when last I visited Clemence, she asked me if I could eventually send you a little do-dad she had stirred up. It will go forward this coming week. In the same package, I should like to include a little item which I thought you might like to use as a paper-weight, although it isn't much of a one. Last Spring, during high water, when I first thought of Arentbourg as an object for our mutual consideration as a haven for years to come on La Cote Joyeuse, I found a smooth-smooth stone on the terrace, where the river had undermined some of the bank. As you know, there are no stone formations in this area, and obviously this one had been smoothed out by some forgotten process, possibly the Natchez Indians who once dwelt in this neighborhood. This, however, is the first evidence that they actually lived on Arentbourg before the advent of the colonial expansion into this region. I suppose it must have lain buried here in the ground for generations, and somehow it has taken on the symbol of the original keystone to Arentbourg. Nothing would be so just as for you to have it, and nothing would please me so much as to pass it along to you, so that whenever it comes to hand, you will actually be holding the first item that eventually will grow into a little kingdom of happiness in this remote and forgotten in the forgotten 18th century that we have inherited from a God that is so good....

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December 1st, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I am a little startled as I write the date line and realize how fast we are approaching the end of 1946.

It is so delightfully like Spring in these parts too, and all this in contrast to the radio accounts of the snowstorms sweeping the North and the East, but which, I sincerely hope, somehow succeeded in passing you by.

Of the enclosure, practically nothing need be said. Poor child, - obviously correspondence is not her forte, and such a communication could scarcely inspire a very heart-felt response, - which, - come to think of it, - might explain, but probably not, the great silence that obtains from across the water.

Brother arrived early yesterday morning. He says Jackie is back from Alexandria and that her husband is doing better. I hope so.

Brother now rattles off his Mother Goose Rhymes pretty well now. He started in this morning on

Little boy Blue, come blow your horn;
The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn;

only Brother had it this way:

Little boy Blue, come blow your horn,
The sheep's in the mud hole, the cow's in the corn;

which is just as good, I reckon, since Brother wouldn't know so much about a meadow as a mud hole.

The postman brought a six page letter to the Madam from la Moore. It contained little news other than her several duties as tonne a tous faire, now that she manages the household, not to mention her new grandson. I must eventually drop her a line, telling her not to forget to matriculate in the Spring session at L. S. U., where, if it please Heaven, she may eventually become the Colonel's lady.

At mail time, I saw Lindberg Carpenter at the store, a nice boy from way back somewhere between Little River and Red River. He had brought up some pecanes he had been "scrapping", as the phrase goes in these parts. I don't recall if I ever spoke to you of Carpenter Village, which isn't a village at

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all, but merely a place where a number of members of the family, bearing the name Carpenter live. It is in about as remote a section as I know, and the people there seldom get up to Melrose. Natchitoches, for them, I suppose, must be almost on the other side of the globe, and I doubt if any of them ever got as far as that from there where for generations they have first and last seen the light of day.

Perhaps I did tell you that some strange person once turned the Carpenters in to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, reporting they were in radio communication with Moscow. It was something of a wild goose chase for the poor investigator who had to look into the matter.

That was several years ago when F. B. I. was investigating the boy friend on the charge that he had come here to stir up racial dissatisfaction on the part of negro laborers in America. What a flock of people must use F. B. I. for mere spite work.

The latest news, following the survey of the Montrose-Melrose lane, gives the information that the new bridge, to replace the present structure, which you may recall in the photograph, taken from the terrace at Arenburg, will place the new unit about 100 feet to the south of the old bridge. This, I think, will eliminate all view of any crossing of the river from our terrace, so that we will give the impression of being a little more removed from ordinary traffic, and in a way, the removal of the old bridge, which I really rather like, will change the appearance of Cane River into what will seem to be a Grand Canal. I don't know what the 1945-1946 style in bridges of this nature may be like, but something tells me that today's designs may not be quite so romantic as those in vogue when the current structure was erected. Therefore, I reckon it is as well that whatever the new replacement may be like, it is as well that it be screened, thanks to its new position, and probably nothing could be more pleasant for a prospect than an uninterrupted Grand Canal.

So my interruptions in this letter, I fear it is of little account. I must break off writing, but not thinking, of someone in particular.....

act. Bridge
new Bridge

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Memorandum to Clipping Service: This is a 'somewhat' of a new because I had a new machine, and a new ribbon. Instead of the usual salutation, I nearly began this note with 'Dear Friend.' That was because of a lot of things coursing through my brain since hearing yesterday's invitation to Learning, with Seneca as the subject, and with one of the best lines being that worthy gentleman's definition of a friend as being a person to whom one can give his best. I think that is a swell definition, and somehow a good definition somehow makes one realize the clearer how much a thing or a person really means, and so somehow adds to the value of the word which so neatly wraps up a whole flock of sensations.

What with this new ribbon, I must write to Mrs. Brandon, to whom I have long delayed writing because I realized that with her failing eyesight, she would sense their weakness the more when confronted by such a faint typed page. I must write to Dora, too. But not because of the new ribbon but because I passed by Clemence's house last night and in the flicker of a somewhat indifferent oil lamp, I noted her latest efforts, showing a decided influence, resulting from her recent trip to the Alexandria Charity Hospital to see Clyde Claude Emmett Davis. She has made three or four pictures, typifying the recent doings. The disagreement that brought about the combat, - and those two are not especially different from her usual touch, and then a couple that are her idea of first aid to the stricken, and then a scene, depicting the details in a hospital ward, - patients in their beds, little side tables, a patient being rolled in on a stretcher, etc., etc. It is all very busy but quite quite gay, and Dora will do handspings when he sees it. When I arrived she was just undertaking one of Clyde Claude Emmett Davis, and the general idea will be a black-black man, lying in the bed, and the sheets looking awfully white and Clyde looking awfully black, and he has on no shirt, but a white-white bandage is bound about his chest, and a tell-tale spot of red indicates the place where he was "stobbed".

Jackie, Mary Frances, Winnie Mae and Junior were with Clemence, and we had quite a lot of fun talking for an hour or so before the small miniature fire, that sissled along on the hearth, a quilt, in its frames, had been drawn to the ceiling, for that is the custom in the Cane River country, and it was all rather like being under a bright canopy, and delightful. Nearly every cabin, such as Celine's or Clemence's has

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spikes in the rafters at appropriate places, and on these spikes the wires or ropes are so attached as to suspend the quilt, while in the making, - that is, while being worked upon, so that the ladies may sit in chairs about the quilt, which, of course, takes up most of the room. When the day's work is completed, and the thing is to be put aside until the morrow, the whole frame, quilt and all, is drawn up to the ceiling, enabling ordinary life to go on beneath its pleasant handiwork.

I had started down to Lemence's after dark, and had caught up with a figure on the road, going in the same direction. It was her son, King, who was just going home after a day's work, - tired, but happy, being fortified with groceries and having the promise of a bath and a good supper on reaching home, where Irene, his wife, and her daughter, Beulah, and Estelle and my friend, Brother, would be awaiting him. When I left him at Lemence's gate, he asked me to come "and sit up" with him, as the saying goes here, and so I told him I would be along in an hour or so.

And so, after leaving Lemence's, I went on down the road to the next house. Brother had heard my footsteps in the gravel, so he was out at the gate to meet me. King had had his supper and was sitting by a nice fire in some newly laundered clothes, - all save stocking, for he was barefoot. Their fireplace isn't very big, but we all got around it, and there was only one little ruffle in the arrangement, and that was when some question came up as to the possibility that Estelle and Beulah, occupying one chair, might not leave room enough for Brother, in his little chair,

to find a place next to me. Well, he got his place, and we talked, - King and I, mostly, and the children sat as still as mice, which is an accomplishment in endurance, for children that age, - the sitting lasting about an hour. Irene served King and me some excellent coffee, and about when I started to push back from the circle, King asked me to taste some fine whiskey he had obtained from somewhere. But I demurred, with great strength of character, - for I really would have enjoyed the whiskey and the pleasure of toasting a glass with him, but I realize that especially for negroes in a dry Parish, whiskey is hard to get. And it is expensive, too, and what's more they like it, and so I pleaded that I had eaten so much for supper or some such, and so said good night, and returned home. It was a pleasant evening all in all, nothing at all exciting, nothing at all intellectual and certainly one entirely out of line with the established order. But there was the pleasantness of being with kindly human beings whom one likes and who, one feels, reciprocates, and after all, I guess that is about as pleasant a sensation socially, as one is likely to experience in life.

Because of the enclosures, I shall write but this single page. It appears that Mr. Bachelier is actually getting his house built in the environs of Natchitoches, and I am glad for him. I thought a line in Miss Robina's letter might amuse you, in reference to Mr. Byrd's entertaining of Annie Gibson's sister, Miss Nellie Ragan, . . .

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December 4th, 1945, . . .
Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Thrice blest was I when today's post brought me three reports, just like that, dating from the 28th, 29th and 30th.

May I tell you how noble I think you are, and how much I appreciate your devotion to correspondence, and at the same time, may I conjure you not to try to exhaust yourself when other matters pile up so high as they have during the last week in November. You always know I will understand.

Thanks, too, for sending along the Dora letter. I thought it very, very nice, and I know that Dora will be delighted when he receives the original.

It certainly was nice of Nadine to share her letter with you, but I appreciate your determination not to duplicate her action by a similar gesture in her general direction.

I found it noble, the way you accepted the disappointment over my inability to grant your request for a tiny mimosa. As for the eventual location of the fine specimen now ready for placing, I shall not attempt to "spot", as the darkies say, the exact position until after the tractors have done some of their smoothing about of the terrace and are done digging the pool, or whatever the later (latter) turns out to be. But of this I am quite sure, there isn't going to be anything at Arenbourg that will prevent us from planting anything we want to anywhere we want to. I should like to have Arenbourg beautiful, or at least charming, but never must form get beyond the realization of human desires to place anything in any spot that pleases regardless of the form involved. At the moment it would seem to me that the mimosa might find a nice situation somewhere along the entrance drive, but all of that will depend on how that business unrolls as the tractor pull out and leave us a chance to survey the ultimate lay out, prior to planting the first tree, which will be your mimosa.

In today's mail came a letter from la belle of the Library Commission. It is extraordinary how in spite of the fact that she says herself she doesn't know the river very well, and in spite of the way the river has always re-acted to her evidences of kindness, she appears to feel that she must always take up the defense for him, regardless of what is said. At the Madam's request, I had responded in her behalf to la C.'s secretary's letter of recent date, remarking

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at the Madam's suggestion that for herself, she couldn't find anything of Lyle in Gumbo Ya-Ya. In Miss Culver's letter today, she explains the whole business this way: - a lot of people object to the first 50 pages about the negroes, etc., because it is bawdy, etc. But says la C., some of the book was done by negroes anyway, and it is possible that they did that part. And then, she explains, as Lyle was sick when the proof reading was being done, - I think she said, "as Lyle was ill", - much of the proof reading was done by Robert Tallent. But she goes on, Lyle says he is willing to assume all responsibility.

So there you have it, - if anything is wrong with the book, the niggers did it, and if that wasn't caught, then the failure was Robert Tallent's, and I think I shall tell that to Dora, and he will be so hot that the paper will sizzle when he responds to the same.

It was my understanding from Miss Culver's secretary that Miss Culver journeyed to New Orleans last Wednesday. In any event, Miss Culver says she did not see Lyle while in New Orleans, and that she learned that he was in New York at that time. It is quite possible that he is, but I shall be amazed if that is really true.

I have always thought it remarkable the way a dog, no matter how he might be kicked about by his master, would continue to wag his tail whenever the master's name was so much as mentioned. I must say the same thing puzzles me even more when it comes to human beings, especially as I know perfectly well that neither individual in this strange comedy-tragedy ever meant anything especial to the other, - save blind devotion on the one part, - to the point of folly.

A lady of far greater mentality, but just as lost as the one mentioned above, is the writer of the enclosed letter. You will note the writhing of a soul, insufficient unto itself, and yet, perhaps through an unfortunate personality and a variety of other circumstances, wanders longly through life, not quite able to find the friend, as described by Seneca, - "one to whom an individual can give his best".

I think the individuals mentioned in the letter are all known to you, - the Beach Master being young Pierce, and in reading of him, I must say my heart goes out to Dr. Butler, whose closing years must be saddened by the darker viewpoints demonstrated by young Pierce and Virginia E. Dixon. Did I tell you that his other daughter, Mary Frances, during the past year, married young Dr. Pugh, of the old Louisiana family by that name. I have a feeling that that marriage may be something of a solace in anotherwise disappointing world.

In the case of our correspondent herself, one recognizes so readily the sincere longing for someone who will lend a sympathetic ear to one who really has something worth while to say, but who lacks the personal attributes to cultivate genuine friendship. Her wish that someone she knows remain unattached, springs merely from

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the fact that nearly everyone she knows is attached, and she makes the error of deducing that it is because they are attached that they automatically have lost the capacity for friendship, whereas in reality, as has been so magnificently demonstrated to me in one shining example, great souls and sympathetic ones are in no way robbed or or made aloof, by such circumstances.

Although the point may seem a little remote, I believe there is much in what the Madam has to say in that old familiar phrase of hers: "Only two people can talk".

The great trouble with ordinary society is the fact that too frequently people keep themselves "lost" by always keeping themselves in a crowd. By following such a course, one never gets to know anyone very well and confidences and thoughts of genuine merit, very frequently cannot be discussed in the buzz of gatherings. The springs from which one might draw strength and refreshment somehow dry up instantly when the heat of too much heat of conversation, superficial at best, prevades the atmosphere.

I have long felt that the true depths of the waters of life are best plumbed by but two sympathetic souls. The presence of a third party or a thirteenth, somehow muddies the waters, and the visions and the values are lost on an uncertain surface. I think our correspondent has never discovered that secret.

Once a thought or an idea has been drawn from the depths of the universe, they are often enhanced in value and made to shine the more clearly by bringing them up for discussion with a group number several people, but to discover those truths in the beginning, and to gain strength in the search for them, the process must be limited to not more than two in most instances.

Along that line, I have often felt, as I envision the future of Arenbourg, it would be so much more satisfactory and impregnated with happiness for all if in case of guests of quality for dinner or supper, number 8, for example, if two tables of four each might be set on the terrace, rather than one big table for 8. And the best part of the whole business would be that between times, there would be an even smaller table for but two.

I reckon our correspondent has so often seen people of indifferent depth get lost after becoming attached, that she is under the impression that such a transposition always occurs. I suppose, in view of the little circle in which she has lived, such a conclusion would be logical, but how little does she comprehend that one can have a very special compartment in the heart for one human being and still have endless other compartments for the rest of humanity.

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Just one more thing, and then I am done for this sitting, which is altogether too lengthy even now.

You may recall some 7 or 8 years ago that I enunciated a theory that men, even as women, are susceptible to certain cycles, averaging about a month for one complete rotation, wherein their physical and mental and spiritual vigor goes from a high level to a low point, and so 'round and 'round. I have continued this observation which I thought original over a period of years and found it to be borne out by continued observations.

I have not read the article yet, but J. H. told me yesterday, when I spoke of that theory to him, - what with things rather down in his kenage, and he surprised me by saying that in the December Reader's Digest there is such a theory set down, following a number of years of observation on the part of certain medical authorities. Isn't it strange how individual theories, even as in the case of inventions, sometimes develop concurrently, without either party thus speculating, being aware that another or others are on the same track.

I must skip for the moment, and please for give the length of this epistle.

Once a thought or an idea has been drawn from the depths of the universe, they are often enhanced in value and made to shine the more clearly by bringing them up for discussion with a group number several people, but to discover those few truths in the beginning, and to gain strength in the search for them, the process must be limited to not more than two or three instances.

Along these lines, I have often felt, as I envision the future of the world, that the only way to achieve a better world is to have a better man. I have often felt, as I envision the future of the world, that the only way to achieve a better world is to have a better man.

I reckon our correspondent has so often seen people of indifferent depth get lost after becoming attached to a woman. It is under the impression that such a transformation always occurs. I suppose, in view of the little circle in which she has lived, such a conclusion would be logical, but how little does she comprehend that one can have a very special compartment in the heart for one woman being and still have endless other compartments for the rest of the world.

1529

December 5th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service

Your wintry weather of late is a little more comprehensible, - just a little, for we have been having some rain, and the thermometer is down around the 30's this morning. In two or three hours, I shall be going to the store and it will be filled with negroes, hugging the gas stove and generally delighted that there is no work on a day such as this "when God ain't got in mind for folks to work when it is like what 'tis".

But one man's meat being another man's poison, I profited by yesterday's high winds and low temperatures by getting caught up on a couple of back items I have been holding until Mr. Brew could lay aside his big old truck for a few minutes.

And so I thank you again for sending the perfectly grand excerpt regarding Mount Morris which you were so good as to copy for me.

It held a flock of particulars I didn't know about, aside from the original name of the country seat itself.

It is curious that I had never learned about the identity of Mrs. Roger Morris until this late date. I had heard much of how George Washington had wooed, - or had been wooed some stories have it, by la Phillips before his marriage to the widow, Martha Custis. And speaking of la Custis recalls to mind that I have long thought it would be a good question to submit to Information Please: What was the maiden name of Martha Washington? And the answer, of course, is Martha Dandridge, which the experts might or might not recall under the stress of the radio crowds, etc.

I think I have spoken to you of the lovely country place of the Phillips girl at Phillips Manor, hard by Dobbs Ferry. As I recall, the Yonkers home is much older and much less elegant, while the one further up the Hudson is really charming. An old friend of mine bought a small slice from the old place and I used to go there quite often once upon a time. In those years it was the home of some people named Kendal, and very charming it was, too. And just to think that Madam Morris had two such lovely country seats, Phillips Manor and Mount Morris.

I especially liked the phrasing of the advertisement when old Mr. Carroll sold Mount Morris, - and especially the part about oystering and clamming. If one can go fishing, I reckon one might go oystering, too, but it certainly seems to sound odd and I can't imagine what kind of oysters Manhattan ever produced.

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I wish I could recall if I spoke to you about the quilt which we are "calculating" to stir up.

Ever so long ago, Cliff Byrd got a huge sheet of heavy brown wrapping paper and drew a large picture of Melrose on it, - the house perhaps two and a half or three feet wide, overhead he put in some clouds, and to the side, - both sides, some trees and bushes, and in the foreground the blue waters of Cane River. When completely sketched, it was the size of a bed quilt.

The thing came to mind some time back, and it seemed like a good item for Arenbourg. After much search, the sketch was found, and this afternoon I'll bet Clemence will be on all fours, after finishing this morning's laundry, pouring over the design and contriving something in her mind that will be extraordinary.

In spite of the high winds yesterday afternoon, I headed out for her house with the great roll of paper. But before getting under full sail, I stopped off at the store and got a few yards, - say 30 or 40, of light wrapping paper.

Arriving at Clemence's, we figured it out that we could transfer the original design onto the thinner paper, on which the various pieces of cloth could be sewed, thus leaving the original pattern for us to refer to at any old time.

Somehow I have a feeling that with Mr. Byrd's distinctly attractive creation as a sketch and Clemence's ability to "rig the thing up", we shall have a really striking item for Arenbourg eventually, and what with the original sketch retained, perhaps Clemence can such several extra pieces at the same time she does the first set, and so be able to make the succeeding ones with dispatch. I can think of a few people who would be delighted to have a Cane River item of this type, and it will be nice if it can go along with some of the other Hunter undertakings.

Knowing Clemence as I do, she will be determined to get the thing into production. And I shall be amazed if she really does take time out to transfer the design, which I hope she does, but shall be sure about only when I see the quilt completed.

I have written Madam Parlange for an explanation in Combo Ya-Ya. In the chapter on plantations, it says that a Parlange was Quarter Master of both General Banks and General Taylor in the Red River campaign. I can't understand how the same man could be Quarter Master of both the Yankee and Confederate armies at the same time, but if I find out, I'll surely let you know.

I must apologize for the cumbersome nature of the box going forward to you today. The item from Clemence was difficult to put into anything small, but once opened the 4 items contained therein may readily be managed piece meal, once the wedded up newspapers are disposed of.....

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Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I'm late this morning and accordingly this report may be a little more sketchy than usual. To give you a little more background, I am a-tingle with crisp morning ozone. Up early, I took a gander at the wood yard, for yesterday Bill Roque brought me mountains of fat pine, about an inch thick and four feet long and 6 inches wide. It fits my fireplace nicely, and burns like mad, but its lasting qualities are not great, and so I have had a look at the Christmas log situation, - any big old logs for long burning being known as Christmas logs to the local darkies.

And using that word, - the last in the foregoing paragraph, reminds me of a radio program I heard by chance last night.

I couldn't find anything in particular of interest, and being rather tired, I just sank back on my pillows and let the darn thing play as it would. It seems that the Sonatra Old Gold outfit was in ascendancy on the particular wave my dial was tuned in on. There was some talk to which I paid little attention about awarding Sonatra some printer's or news writer's award for his work in better racial or mor toneration understandings, none of which I paid much attention.

Then there was some music and the singing of a few bars from Old Kentucky Home, - and no further comment about the subject in hand.

If memory serves, Stephen Foster wrote the opening line of the song to go like this:

"The sun shines bring on my Old Kentucky home,
'Tis summer, the darkies are gay...."

But the way he sang the second line was:
'Tis summer, the old folks are gay....."

It is my understanding that some negroes object to the word "darkie", although I have never discussed the point with any of my friends on that score. I assume that the existence of such a feeling, plus the fact that the singer is being hailed as a champion for better racial understanding may be the reason for having changed the words, but it is ridiculous, so far as the new substitution is concerned, I think. It looks to me as though "negroes" could have been substituted for "darkies" without changing the meter, but whoever hit on making those old foks up in Kentucky gay got off on the wrong foot, I think. Besides, it's a little futile trying to re-write a classic like anything Stephen Foster ever wrote, I think.

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Back from the wood yard, I discovered that instead of catching another skunk last night, a big fat old oppssum was in the trap. Sam Peace has just carried him away, and at Sam's house tonight there will be roast 'possum and sweet potatoes, roasted in the asks along side, and things will be merry.

From my agents, I learn that Brosie Peace, now occupying the little cabin on the narrow strip of H. J. H.'s land, sandwiched in between Arenbourg and Alfred Llorenz, is moving today to the cabin occupied by the late lamented Evalena Easley, Brosie having been told by Mr. J. H. that I had bought the property on which Brosie's dwelling stands. If that be true, and it may not be, so far as what J. H. told him, I am wondering what family is destined for Brosie's vacated house. I certainly hope not the Peter Matoyers, since their accumulation of hogs, horses and mules would scarcely have breathing space on that little strip, and for our point of view, it would be better to have them move someplace other than such a tiny strip so close to their former range. Well, we shall see.

I think the enclosed letter from Rudolph Fuchs is of little interest, save for its dating. Written on November 6th, it was gotten around to only yesterday, for during the past month, I have concentrated only on what seemed more highly valued by myself, what with Mr. Brew's time so limited. I think you know that Rudolph is one generation from Germany, and is currently at Halloran Hospital on Staten Island where he has something to do with German prisoners of war.

The postman brought us nothing yesterday, not even the Congressional record, so today we shall probably have a flock of 2nd Class mail, and I hope that Clemence may receive her application from Rosenwald shortly. I am surprised it has not come long before this, and in view of the lateness of the hour, I am wondering if this year's decisions are already in the bag.

Well, Brother has come and gone, but will probably be back. Yesterday he didn't make it until after the third start. The first return was occasioned by "Brimmers" in the road that frightened him. I accompanied him part way, until he was beyond the flock. And after returning to this keyboard, Lo! brother appeared again. He had encountered another flock, and again we started out. If I don't watch out, I shall be adding the role of companionate conductor as well as tutor to my several lines of endeavor.

well as tutor to my several lines of endeavor. It is my understanding that some persons object to the word "barkie", although I have never discussed the point with any of my friends on that score. I assume that the existence of such a feeling, since the fact that the subject is being called as a champion for better reason understanding may be the reason for having changed the words, but it is ridiculous, so far as the new substitution is concerned, I think. It looks to me as though "barkies" could have been substituted for "arlies" without changing the meter, but whoever hit on barkie those old folks up in Kentucky say got off on the wrong foot, I think. Besides, it's a little futile trying to re-write a classic like anything - better ever wrote, I think.

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Fortune Magazine, November, 1945.

The Monster of Grammont.

December 7th, 1945

Memorandum to Clipping Service: Jan 1, 1951

Memorandum to Clipping Service: sent James and Susan and
several other people of which I don't mention and I don't
think the above items are something Mrs. Knipmayer mentioned yesterday
when she dropped by with the doctor and the Madam told her she
might be able to locate them through your good offices in New York.

The Madam asks me to say to tell you that almost any day now she is threatening to take a pen in hand to drop you a line, and that she is sending a check for outstanding expenditures, but she knows you are not worrying on that score. On my own behalf, relative to the two items, I would ask you not to bother about them at all, and certainly not until well into 1946. The November issue of Fortune would not likely appear on the market in several months anyway, and as for the novel, I assume it is a novel, is nothing, I am sure, that Mrs. Knipmayer is in any hurry for. She merely wanted to give it to her son sometime, the latter having read a book by that title, and having relinquished it to its original owner at some time in the past, says he would eventually like to own a copy for himself. There is nothing in the Christmas business about all this, and don't let it worry you, for if you should never run across either, it will just be counted off as something that was impossible to locate.

And now that that business is out of the way, may we get back to ourselves.

The laggardly postman of day before yesterday made up handsomely by yesterday's post. There were again letters for neither the Adam nor for me from any quarter, but the 2nd class mail, or the parcel post department, was truly elegant. The perfectly exquisite books in their equally nice wrapping, came safely to hand, and if the eventual recipients are half as crazy about them as I am, then there are going to be some happy hearts along this bend of Cane River this Christmas.

The photographic item, Tobe, is going to both gladden and be poured over and over from now until Kingdom Come, and already I can fancy how it is going to be kept in some special place in some particular home, destitute of books, and become an object of pride whenever plenty of people, none of them ever having possessed a book, pass that way.

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I was truly enchanted at the copy of The Ugly Duckling, and strangely enough, I don't recall ever having seen a copy of that story in a book all devoted to just that particular story. As a child, and even now, my favorite fairy story is Cinderella. As a child, and equally so now, The Ugly Duckling, was way out ahead in stories having to do with animals or our feathered friends. I am not sure that too poignant a story usually appeals to a child, but the nicest thing about the Duckling tale was the splendid way it turned out, and I suppose the promise of happiness in the end, helping one to endure the present, just so long as the future can be anticipated in part, is the pattern which is likely to spread over the lives of many a child, from infancy to old age, so that as a straight bit of fiction for youngsters, it is likely to be as influential as almost anything he is likely to run up against in those earlier years, and is not likely to be out-done by anything along similar lines that will follow after.

As for the Rojankovsky book, you already know how much I love that, - it is such a treasure of delights on every page, and while its artistic merits are likely to exceed the ability of those who see it in so far as actually appraising its true value completely, still, it is awfully nice to realize that having once laid eyes on its contents, many of those who view it will always see lots of the living objects, therein depicted, in a fashion henceforth that will always be different, a little more special to them, and bubbling over in their own hearts down through the years, as one glance at a chicken, for example, as it will pass before them a million times in real life, their hearts and memories will instinctively leap back to the lovely gift book that someone from afar brought into their lives, even before they knew you to be their friend.

It all makes me feel very happy and I know you are joining me in sensing a happier Christmas this year just in the realization of the pleasures that your kindness and generosity has afforded us all, you, me and our Cane River friends.

Louisiana has such curious weather that I cannot but remark upon the sudden change that developed yesterday. There was a white frost in the morning, and by noon a delicious south west wind was blowing warm-warm. By evening the thin orbit of the new moon shimmered through a evening sky that somehow put out a feeling of warmth that registered in the thermometers. This morning I have a fire going on my hearth, but it is purely decorative, and through the open door staggers in a breath of narcissus in full flower that is so heady there is nothing of December in the air but only May.

And speaking of fire, there was one yesterday that consumed a cabin about 11:30 in full sunshine, so that it was consumed almost before anyone knew it was on fire.

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The cabin was occupied as a home by Maybelle, King Hunter's former wife, and Brother's mama. When King and Maybelle parted, Brother eventually went to live with King, along with Estelle, while Maybelle kept the two other children.

Maybelle is a no-account, lacking even the energy which her sister, Attie, our former cook, used to demonstrate. The house was in the lane in the field, immediately behind the house where I live. It is to the North, and parallels the river road.

Aunt Maline, Sam Peace's mama, lives in the first house on the line, just beyond the bamboo hedge at the back of the white garden. Maybelle and her present "helper" O'Levy, possibly a corruption from Olivier, lives in the next cabin, and there is a third, temporarily untenanted. But the thing about Maybelle's house that I liked was the age of the thing. It was one of the two remaining log cabins, held over from slavery days. I had decided some time back that I would eventually take it down and move it to Arenbourg, placing it at one end of the pond, and that eventually we would have the darkies build us one of those unusual round mud chimneys in it. But now, you see, we shall have to forego that idea. But Sam Peace tells me that half of his house is new and that the other half is of logs and dates from slavery times, too. He says he would be glad if I would take the original house away from his dwelling, as he has plenty of room without that part, and so perhaps something may be worked out along that line, so that we shall have our original slave cabin of logs and our unique Cane River round mud chimney, too.

Today I got off a package to Dora, and one that is likely to give him great satisfaction, I think. It contained an item similar to the one she sent you, - and I should have remarked before this that in each case, so Clemence told me, the name of the individual there represented in the item sent, is pinned on to the same. There was a shipment of some of Clemence's latest efforts and some of Mary Frances's paintings, which I should have sent some time back, and a third item, - "borrowed", if I may say so, which may or may not please Dora, but which I think probably will. It is a very artistic photograph, taken by a rather famous, - quite famous photographer, of Clemence some 25 years ago. So far as facial appearance goes, it isn't anything, for it might be anyone, since the features are scarcely visible. But the figure, - a woman with a hoe, is very nicely done, not unlike one of the more humble figures portrayed in Millet's pictures. The whole thing is very shadowy, with the figure seeming almost to dissolve into the duskiness of first dark. But since it is a likeness of the individual in question, I think he will like it regardless, and I think he should have it. It

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is from an unpublished collection that have been housed here for the past quarter of a century, and since the photographer is now dead, is famous, I am forever expecting Le Grignan to start searching for them, and once having met that fate, they would all, white, but especially those of the negroes, be in profane hands and the world would probably never seem them, and no one would enjoy them.

I am not even certain of the ownership of these fine creations. I think they belonged to the photographer, - I just recall the name, - Doris Allman, who did so many famous people years ago, and who did, I think, the illustrations, among other things, for, - and now the name of that book eludes me.

As I recall, these photographs were sent to the river a short time before her premature death, and no one seems to know if they were ever to have been sent back or what. I guess the river might well claim ownership, - in fact he does, - but for some reason, has never carried them away. Some time back he mentioned that probably La Grignan would ask for them, if she should remember they are here, and he of course would give them to her, for another's sake, but as things turn at present, neither he nor anyone else will ever want them, and I suppose they have forgotten them by now.

Be that as it may, I have sent along this one, - the only one of Clemence, taken so long ago, for I can think of no one who would treasure it so much, and with it, I pointed out that it was merely "a borrowed gift", but between you and me, I think no one will ever ask for it, and if they do not, it can eventually grace Arenbourg, and will be rather nice to supplant some Hunter Show we might eventually put on there privately for our friends.

Alors, I must skip. How I have run on in this morning's sitting, and especially at a time when you must of necessity have a little time even for important things. And yet, somehow it does seem important to discuss all these things, for they are the things that swing about Arenboug and about tomorrow, and that is terribly important.....

1537

consequence, I wrote in the dark, as the sun doesn't rise until dawn in December 7th, 1945. In the morning the pulp in my desk lamp flew out, as I removed the bulb, a piece of the metal rim holding the shade, fell down in the desk. I wrote of course the true flew.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Spring weather, soft and delightful, continues in this clime. I wish we might share some of it with you, or better still, that you might share some of it with us.

I had rather expected a letter from Dora today, and one for Clemence from Aosenwald, and even one from Miss Ramsey, saying that she would be heading in this way to catch a few interiors of the sugar house to photograph the nice round mud chimney, - but there wasn't any first class mail at all, save from little Miss Caroline Dorman, who is something of a riot, without knowing it, - and that letter was addressed to the Madam.

She reports that "ole" Virginie hasn't been quite up to snuff of late, and that she herself has been a little droopy. I was quite taken a-back when the Madam read that both ladies had been suffering, according to Caroline, - or could her typewriter have been off the track, - from - of all things, - ititis. Now that may be a very good word, and may cover some very interesting female complaint, but I don't get far with it. Broken down, I suppose it might be hyphenated to read "it-itis". But, if I recall correctly, "it" is supposed to be some Hollywood phrase, indicating sex attraction. So what a couple of 55ish or 60-ish glamour girls of the briarpatch would be sagging from that could be labeled "it-itis", I most certainly could not imagine. It will probably turn out that both of them merely forgot to fold up their beards the other night and got a little frost bitten.

an interruption

The recent frost has turned the banana plants a delicious pink brown. Thanks to your thoughtfulness, I am able to record them in photographs, having already taken some notes already. Eventually, may - send you a couple of likenesses of a "cooked" banana plant.

1538

I shall turn the page, regardless of the space that may still be left at the bottom of the page. Early this morning the bulb in my desk lamp blew out. As I removed the bulb, a piece of the metal fineal holding the shade, fell down into the socket, and of course the fuse blew. In consequence, I write in the dark, as the sun doesn't rise until 7:07, and my clock points to 5:45.

Long before this you have examined the enclosed bit of switch cane. After some thought, I have come to the conclusion that it provides the best headge possible for the Bermuda Road line along Arenbourg.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands of sprays, such as this one, grow from the main stalk of switch cane, and when a bunch of cane stand together, the screen is opaque. I had long considered bamboo as a hedge, but while that stuff grows faster and taller, it has the bad habit of putting out runners a foot or so up I should say and inch or so, under ground, and then suddenly springing up over night, so that one may go to bed with a nice greensward spreading beyond his window, only to awaken in the morning to find a forest practically pushing up his mattress.

This switch cane increases its stalks, but tight-tight to the parent root, so that in not spreading, it merely intensifies its thickness, and one doesn't have to spend a life time chasing vagrant and meandering sub-surface roots, as one must in Bamboo.

Switch cane grows rather slowly, and in the case of a prolonged freeze, may suffer somewhat, but during the past five years, since the big freeze of 1940, it has not suffered from temperatures, although they have sometimes been low, and it has attained a height of about 12 feet, which is sufficient to hide the highway from Arenbourg. I hope you like this sample.

I like it, too, because it is a native of South Louisiana, and accordingly seems appropriately planted anywhere in this State. I think our Arenbourg project will require about one thousand bunches, each made up of a dozen stalks or so. A little later in the winter, I shall cut down that many bunches leaving only about 3 feet of stalk above the ground. That will transplant nicely, and within a couple of years we ought to have a thick, 10 foot hedge, green all winter and a barrier that will stay put and not go wandering all over the place.

The recent frost has turned the banana plants a delicious pink brown. Thanks to your thoughtfulness, I am able to record them in photographs, having already taken some shots already. Eventually, may I send you a couple of likenesses of a "cooked" banana plant?

1539

Your nice long newsy letter to hand on Saturday and it is good to have full particulars.

My response will be brief, as I write this rather late, on Sunday night, and I shall be arising early in the morning to take Dan back to Camp Polk before Monday's dawn.

I am still trying to form a picture in my mind of the New York Public Library, now that she has had her face lifted and Lady Esther. It sound wonderful and well worth a gander in that direction.

We are in agreement as to the nicety of Dora, had she advised me prior to or on writing to Mr. De Mille. It is a habit that isn't new, but one that may perhaps be altered eventually. I was first struck by it when a flock of columns were stirred up and forwarded without mentioning. They were alright, I guess, but I should have been delighted if the business had been mentioned before they were posted. For the most part, Dora is remarkably satisfactory, but how marvelous it is to know at least one person in the world who seems to coincide without even fore-thought.

Dan came home unexpectedly on Saturday, having driven over with someone who was heading further West, or rather East than Melrose. He must be back early in the morning, so his stay will be brief.

This morning about 9:30, I saw him in his Mother's room. He suggested a little turn in the road, and let our steps took us to Arenbourg, - the first time I had been on the terrace in ever so long.

Dan seemed to like what few ideas I told him I had in mind to carry out. The places out in by the April high water are no smaller, and there is so much to be done when we take over, that I shall scarcely know where to begin, although cleaning up the field where the pond will be will probably come first. I think I shall put a couple of my colored friends to pulling cotton stalks this week, so that when we get a contraption to dig the pond, we shall not be bothered with cotton stalks, which require at least two years of exposure to disintegrate, unless burned.

J. H. tells me he is thinking of making a hurried trip down the West coast of South America by air, crossing over to Brazil where he will look over the cotton situation there. I shall

1540

1540

try to get things lined up, so that I can do a lot while he is away and before Dan is discharged from the Army. Another thing I must keep in mind, however, is the fact that a bulldozer is likely to be secured before long, and that will be helpful in leveling the terrace, but of course nothing much can be planted in that neighborhood or near the little house until the pulling and hauling are taken care of. How many individual things it is well to figure out in advance.

After talking a bit with Peter Metoyer, who plans to move into Browse's house until another is built on the East side of the Bermuda Road, with the suggestion thrown in that he build a lane for his cattle to the river, - and I hope to heaven he builds it on the Alfred Llorenz line, - Dan and I returned to the garage, - the Draiser Program on invitation to earning having long since played out. After talking a bit with the boys there, - stimulants had them all on the merry side, - we went to the store where Charles Mazurette had just arrived.

I have seen Charles alone but for a minute or two. He told me that on the day he called on the river, the latter was very much on the tipsy side, although his appearance was better than he had ever seen it and that at times his thoughts were as lucid and clear as that of a person quite sober. At intervals in between, the alcho (alcohol) was obviously doing cover time. I suppose such a situation may explain why Julia Culver was told he was in New York when she telephoned from the lobby the other day. Well, so much for that, and may we not be honored during the holidays.

Miss Robina, in a letter arriving Saturday, acknowledged receipt of Gumboy Ya-Ya which the Madam had sent her to read. She said she had just received it, but had merely had an opportunity to glance at it. Realizing as she did that it was a W P A book, she very neatly inquired as to why, under those circumstances, Lyle's list of books should appear in such a publication, - and I think she had a \$64.00 question right there. There was something else in the letter the Madam wanted to save, and accordingly kept the letter. When she writes her reaction, I shall try to get it and send it along.

The enclosure is from John Martin, and on the strength of it, the Madam suggests that he might like to do about \$10.00 worth of transcription for her from fragments of the Isaac Erwin diary. I must write to inquire. To many a modern person, Mr. Martin's letters would be too long or too wordy, but for me, perhaps because I admire him so much, I find they contain a flavor or an essence of pre-Atomic gentility that has ever so much to be said in its favor. - Thanks again for the nice, nice letter, and please don't try to write when things are so pressing as they must be right now.....

Down the West coast of North America by air, crossing over to Brazil where he will look over the cotton situation there. I shall

1541

1541

Memorandum to Clipping Service: December 10th, 1945. It has been snowing most of the day in Manhattan," said tonight's Columbia newsround up. "It has been snowing most of the day in Manhattan," said tonight's Columbia newsround up. "It has been snowing most of the day in Manhattan," said tonight's Columbia newsround up.

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It makes my heart warm all over just to think of all the joy your generosity is going to put into the hearts of so many people, - large and small, and I bless you in their name as well as my own, even though they might not always select me as their spokesman.

Mr. Brew was on a tractor all day, and so accordingly is no doubt in bed by now, - I write at 9:30 p.m. He may have passed by my house, but I remained a little later at the big house than usual, and so have missed him. I shall therefore have to hold your letter until tomorrow morning for absorbing it. There seems to be one from someone whom I know not, and one that looks as though it might be from Madam. I shall send them along when I have had a chance to read them, - which will be after yours.

Charles left for Little River before I got back home, and I learned to night from Peter Batistte that I had one or two colored visitors, but Bill Rocque, who is quite deaf, told the latter that the cook had told him, that I was stepping of my land, - an expression used here for measuring one's property. I reckon what the cook really said was that I had started out with Mr. Dan, which is another way Harnett Kane might get some true facts about life.

1542

A side light on Plantation Parade is the number of letters coming to hand from unknown individuals, with requests in each case, for reservations varying in length from a week end to a week. There are a couple of responses going out in the next mail, headed for Texas. One is in response to a teacher of History in some college or other who would bring four ladies with her to spend the New Year's week end, - from Friday until Tuesday. Although the Madam's name appears in the Kane opus, as I recall, often the envelopes read: "To the Proprietor of Melrose Plantation".

To each letter I say "No", as politely as possible, but tell the writer that if they come to Natchitoches and care to drive out to Melrose, I shall be glad to show them about the place. I do not add the information that the pilgrimage tour will not include an exhibit of Miss Cammie, which, perhaps, is the main reason why many a bag feels the urge to come.

Two of the latest manifestations of the local Prohibition enforcement might be mentioned, just to keep you abreast of how things go in that department in this Parish. One day last week, - I believe it was a Saturday night, the Sheriff, dressed in a soldier's costume, visited Kampti, - up Caroline Dormon's way, and mingling with the negroes, asked first one and then another if they couldn't help a poor thirsty soldier get a drink. The negroes, unsuspecting the white man's duplicity, accommodated the man whom they supposed was just back from the wars, and in each instance, the negro was carted off to the Natchitoches jail. Charming, don't you think?

And on Sunday night, Mr. Morris, the Sheriff, came down this way. He stopped momentarily at the garage where Dan and I were talking, and then headed up the Bermuda Road, stopping and "Phonsie" Metoyer's house, which he turned upside down, inside out, other end to, - and found nothing. Of course no Sheriff has a right to enter any one's house in the whole United States without a warrant of search, but little does the Law interest the hillbilly enforcement officer. If I had a little, - or rather a lot, of money, I should like to get behind "Phonsie" and start suit against the Sheriff for unlawful entry.

Alright, I must fold at this point. And dreams will be happy because they will revolve about Christmas and the female Santa Claus who is going to make so many people happy this Christmas time on Cane River.....

1543

December 11th, 1945.

Memorandum to Lipping Service:

Again I write at night.

I have read your two perfectly grand letters, and naturally I feel elated to have two such epistles to engrave on the heart and the mind, as I consign them to the flames, - as is the fate of all your communications.

It is good of you to keep me informed of all the doings, and it is good to have a further brief word from Egon, thanks to your good offices, and of news concerning Espionage en Espagne, of which I would have further particulars, should news come to hand from time to time.

It is nice of you to say that you do not tire of my constant talk about Arenbourg, too, and I reckon you are in for endless communications on that score.

I was at Arenbourg this afternoon, as a matter of fact. Puny wanted to walk over the project with me, even though the Peter Metoyers have not moved as yet. I laughed to myself when our little tour was completed for Puny from his heart, told me he thought the plans were "grand", and that he wanted me to get a whole flock of "mens" to get to going on the thing just as soon as "us - es" could, because he wanted to help and he "knewed" I was going to be proud when "all us - es" got done.

I don't know how much he understood of all I explained to him, and after leaving him, I thanked my lucky stars that you weren't along because I am sure it would have been a great disappointment to you, - the barrenness of the place as contrasted with all the flowery ideas I have talked about for so long. A sculptor, looking at a block of white marble, can readily enthuse over the stone because he sees not the rough hewn object but the beautiful figure his mind has already fashioned. A pastry cook, confronted by some fine looking apples, some nice fresh butter, plenty of sugar and flour, can go into a vast song and dance because he sees beyond the raw objects and slap through to the finished tarts. And so, I fear, it is with Arenbourg. I see it as it will eventually look when the trees have grown, - and especially the mimosa, - and the Louisiana switch cane has curtained the domain, and the pond is unfolding a glory of lovely water lilies, and the magnolias are opening their great ivory lamps, and la maison de la reine is built, and at the far end of the terrace, blotting out Uncle Door-stone's is a delicious little white Greek temple, flanked on either side by hedges of green, and we are all together having late supper on the gallery, and the world has

1544

sped along, ignoring the switch came along the Bermuda Road, and we are dwelling pleasantly with our friends in this little forgotten segment of an 18th century barnassus.

In today's cold gray December light, the place was just a mess. Perhaps a messy desert would better describe it. Cotton stalks grow where the lilies will eventually open their waxen cups. A couple of mules, a cow or two and some pigs pull at the uneven grass where the terrace will unroll its velvety green carpet and a lop-sided coop occupies the spot where the little Greek temple will find its emplacement at some day in the future. A muddy ditch now presents a murky face where a modest drive will ultimately lead the bidden guest from the public road to wind itself out of sight where the camellias will someday splash their waxy leaves with festoons of white and pink and red. The maison de la reine doesn't even exist, but merely the shell of the house where the passing nobility of Cane River aristocracy of color have dwelt so long.

There's a heap of work to be done, the more difficult because one must attempt the basic garden constructions, prior to planting anything, without too much assurance that those major undertakings, - such as lowering certain levels and straightening the edge of the terrace, without a firm decision as to whether it be best to accept the situation more or less as it is, - geographically, and get on with the planting, or hold up the planting for another season while making an effort to reach a basic perfection before establishing the primary hedges and the magnolia avenue. But that is my business to decide and to attempt as best I can, since the materials at hand are within nobody's grasp but my own, - and accordingly, I shall worry you no further with such details.

I saw J. A. for a moment tonight. It was the first time since Saturday. He was very nice, and said if I didn't mind, Peter and his family would move into Browse's house temporarily, and that Browse's house would be moved across the road, - to the East side of the highway, and did I mind if Peter constructed a narrow lane down to the River for his cattle. I asked if that couldn't be done along Alfred's line. He said it certainly could. I told him that arrangement would suit me. After all, it appears that just as I had hoped, eventually our line will be extended so as to include all of the property, including the little strip adjoining Alfred Lorenz's, - and sometime we shall acquire that outright, perhaps, - although it isn't important at the moment.

So thing revolve around Arenbourg, and from here on out, I reckon you will hear about it almost daily.

1545

I don't recall when last a line came from Dora, but it seems ever so long. Perhaps that is merely because I have had so many other things in mind. It seems strange to me, too, that no application has come from Chicago for Clemence, but none has.

The enclosed letter from Lady Lake may or may not contain material of interest, but I suspect not. I read the thing so hurriedly that I can't recall anything she did say, save that some pictures of Clemence and her paintings might serve as a basis for some material in a write up in some magazine or other. I shall eventually send the Lake letter to Dora if you will kindly return it at your convenience.

In the mean time, I continue to pull wires to secure the billiard table, which, up to now, has not come to hand, but which, I have a feeling, may come to hand before so very long.

On Sunday, as we passed Madame Aubin Adoue's, Dan said that he ought to be going to take the old house down shortly. So passes another old landmark of the mulatto civilization. But if doomed it is to be, I shall make every effort to get as many openings as possible, to be incorporated at Arenbourg. It would be lovely to have the thing taken down and put up at one end of the lake, but that, of course, would be accomplished only with a thousand dollars or so, and accordingly we shall do what we can to save what we can save, and that will be about the best we can.

At least that matter isn't anything like a quandary, as in the case of whether it be best merely to level off the terrace and plant the magnolias, or hold up the magnolia planting in hopes of being able to introduce a lower level before setting them out.

You mention a possible transcript of the latest Grignan letter, and I would appreciate it, although I wouldn't ask you to take time out to make it. There is much talk here of the items of jewelry along the lines you mention. She has already extracted her grandmothers from the strong box and the latest thing I heard about was her determination to have the ears of her youngest child pierced, although that is but second hand news to me as I haven't laid eyes on her for a couple of weeks or more. It is interesting that Dan hasn't even dropped in to see her since his return to this region. It is my understanding that she and her husband took possession of their Shreveport property last Sunday, and are putting his parents in the house until the new owners move to that city, - now tentatively set for March. Up to the present writing, she has never heard of the Arenbourg property, but will just about fall out when she learns of it, which will most certainly be long before March, I assume. I urge you to inconvenience yourself in no way for that bag.

1546

I assume that the current return of physicians from the wars may well put a crimp in the rich field in which they have been reaping a harvest without competition during these past few years. It is said that their patients frequently number as many as 300 a day. Even if that be exaggerated by 100 per cent, the income is quite imposing, since the average charge, - even if nothing more than aspirin is given, averages about \$3.00. For ever so long they have been burying their money in fruit jars in their garage. Of course that is not to avoid income tax or anything like that. Oh, no.

But I reckon they had better make all the hay they can while the sun shines, for the last time a physician came to their community, they had no patients whatsoever. The war gave them the entire field as exclusively their own. But now the war is over and another physician will come along in that place. And of course in their new location, if and when they move, there will be plenty of other physicians, and what with such a bag on the one hand and such a piece of baggage as the husband has turned out to be, the gravy is bound to be a lot thinner. But aren't you a little floored by the sheer mathematics of the present set up, - 3 times 300 times 365? I am still made a little dizzy even when I cut the thing in half and then cut that figure in half and then reduce it some more. And especially when one stops to think that the dominant factor in the set up is shunned by all who don't know her and loathed by all who do.

You spoke of "adine, - spoke of her with gentleness, with charity and with nobility. Perhaps one of the most generous things anyone does is to sympathize with human frailties, especially when they appear in others where only strength is paramount in the finder. Was it Tennyson who said that line that is so difficult to remember: "For God has larger other eyes and makes allowance for us all"? Poor Nadine, so strong, so weak. If you really think my letters contribute anything to helping her over a difficult time, I must make an effort to write her again soon, without awaiting her response. It is certainly good to know that in my notes to you, however, that but one person receives them.

And now I must close for this sitting. I must tell you however that your two letters to hand have afforded me no end of pleasure and that the Cane River Christmas packages, arriving in yesterday's post, are hiding in my armoire and are just bursting with impatience to get distributed.....

1547

December 12th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:
Again I write you a line at night. Perhaps I had better, since Mr. Bachellier came today, and unless I knock off a note before going to bed, I shall get none off at all, since he is an early visitor in the morning.

There were several letters in today's post. I enclose two. There was one to me from Madame Parlange, saying that neither she nor her husband had the vaguest idea what Lyle could have been up to when he stated in the Parlange article in the Ya-Ya book when he said a "Parlange acted as Quarter Master to both the Federal and Confederate Armies in the Cane River campaign.

The Madam wanted to paste that in her copy of the Ya-Ya thing, and so I shall not send it along. Then there was a letter from Miss Culver, saying that she was heading for Shreveport with a friend from Washington, D. C., and another from California, and that she would stop over at Melrose on her return, arriving here Thursday, which is tomorrow. In her letter she said she understood Lyle was in the hospital.

Then came a letter from Lyle himself. He was writing in bed from the Baptist Hospital, - 2 "in again for the same old thing".

He spoke in glowing terms of the success of his recent visit to New York, having brought back enough money to carry him throughout the next year. He says he is going to do a novel, the title being a secret, - called Last Island, and that Hollywood is already bidding for it. You will of course make what you can out of all that. He also says he is fixing to live on a steamboat and that the Madam and I must come and live with him. That would be nice, too.

There you have it, save for the fact that he started off by saying that he was practically alright and that he was coming up to Melrose soon. That was a moving bit of information, too.

Well, aside from that there were a few other pieces of mail, but mostly of a non-descript nature, and I must say that for one morning's post, just the one letter would have been enough to make one's head go around in a whirl.

1548

Of course what I should like to know is if somebody in Hollywood is really going to do a Last Island picture, and if there is the slightest bit of truth in the fact that somebody might be casting about for a suitable vehicle for that grave disaster.

I may or may not have mentioned that in fixing up Madam Beaumont's opus, we included the Last Island storm as a dramatic bit of super froth for Hollywood or whatnot. I think I shall tell Dora everything that was in the letter and perhaps include a rough draft of a letter to Mr. De Mille, suggesting that he might as well get in on the Last Island storm early.

Of course I don't believe anything about the novel, and yet wouldn't it be odd if the decision of Hollywood to do the Last Island storm stemmed from the Synopsis submitted to the De Mille office, and somehow the thing, the casting about for somebody's opus on that big number should have sprung up in New York while Lyle was there, if indeed, he was.

It rained here this afternoon, and what with the elements and Mr. Bachelier on my hands, I didn't do very much. I did, however, make arrangements with Little King to pull up all the cotton stalks on Arenbourg tomorrow, and that is quite a job, but he will do it alright, and with that accomplished, the tractors will be able to get to stirring whenever circumstances warrant.

Miss Hobina sent a supply of blank paper the same length as the original paper on which old Isaac Erwin kept his Diary. If Mr. Martin does the transcription, the original and the transcript will be bound together. I think I shall ask him to make the transcript in duplicate, so that we may have a volume of the Isaac Erwin Diary at Arenbourg, since the duplicate came quite readily be made at the same time. The 300 odd pages are made up of fragments, in which the years 1847, 1849, 1853 and 1854 figure for the most part.

The bound copy of the Benjamin Chase Journal came from the binders yesterday. They did a neat job, the binding being in red buckram and the lettering in gold. The back of the thing carries the title "Benjamin Chase of Mantua", and my name is on the front cover. It looks very nice but they certainly made my name large enough, but not quite so big as on the old Mathez newspapers, similarly contrived.

I would ask your opinion (interruption), - I would ask your opinion on a matter. Would you recommend that I send the Chase Journal to Dora at the present time? I told him it was still at the binders. Would you leave it there a while longer or give it to him to extract the wheat from the chaff? I shall value your opinion, although may not accept it as a decision. And thanks a lot for either saying yes or no about sending it at this time. ...

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1549

Memorandum to Shipping Service:

Again I write at night.

The Madam was perfectly enchanted with the lovely, lovely gift that came in this morning's post.

The mail was short, in fact there was only a few newspapers, and no letters. The gift was the only thing of importance and there was nothing to prevent it from occupying the center of everything. After opening the package, and looking at the contents, she did not fold it back into its box, but continued to hold it on her lap, fondling between her fingers. That was this morning. Before I left the big house tonight, she opened the package again and again she held it on her lap. I really think it afforded her much much pleasure both for itself but primarily because it seemed to bring someone else a little closer to you and her, as it were, - somehow like da Vinci's Saint Anne and her daughter Mary, - two people almost but almost one. It was really touching and I liked it for you.

I really haven't anything new to report, and were I to refer you to yesterday's letter for reading, that epistle would about cover the case, - and since you wouldn't have to turn to that, - having already read it once, you would thereby save a great deal of time.

The general disintegration that sets in among Cane River people about the middle of December, lasting through Christmas, has already set in, and accordingly coffee comes sometimes at 6:00 a.m., and sometimes at 8:00, - and sometimes it doesn't come until it is brought on the breakfast tray with the hot chocolate at any old time from 7:00 to 8:30. About December 26th, the usual routine of an early hour for coffee and an ordered space between it and breakfast will commence again, but until then, one just grabs whatever comes, - if at all, - and is glad that there are still signs of activity in the department that is very susceptible to the let-down following cotton time and the pick up arriving on Christmas morning.

And so, I waited not for coffee this morning, but made a round at Arenbourg between dawn and 7:45, - and still got back home before Sam Peace arrived. After breakfast, - Brother not coming for his little round, I took out again before mail time. I had expected the cotton stalks to be all pulled up today. I was enchanted the weather was warm and the ground moist, making the job twice easier.

1550

But whatever stalks were pulled, I did the pulling, and that wasn't much. Back to the store for the incoming mail, and there I found several of my "little River friends with whom I chatted for a while awaiting the postman. But he failing to arrive early, I again thought I would make a round at Arenbourg. I took Dee-Dee Boy with me. I am crazy about Dee-Dee Boy, - his name is really Robert Anthony Senior, - a negro who is sweet, and one who has such a raft of children and grandchildren that I don't know half of them I think Doreatha is one of his daughters, - she is Ezra's wife, and three of his sons are Attrice, Robert and Emmett Anthony, and of the rest I don't know their names. Well, Robert, senior, familiarly known as Dee-Dee Boy to the grown-ups and Mr. Dee-Dee Boy to the children, - Dee-Dee Boy and I made a round at Arenbourg, and he thought it was a fine place and he confided to me that night before last in his remote cabin on Oak Little River, "us-es was a-settin' 'rou'd before the fire a-talkin' and two of my folks say that if ever Mr. Swan, - some of them can't manage the other pronunciation, - gets a-buildin', us-es is gwine to give up a-plantin' and work for that man".

And I am sure the local Merchant-Planter would just love that.

Back home, and the Knipmayers came, and were gay as usual, with some more stories about Let and Peck and some outlandish stories about problems coming to their attention during the past week, and we all laughed and had a good half hour together. Then they left for Miss Pally's, and the Madam and I examined the package in today's post, and then Mr. Bachelier and I went down for dinner, and so went the morning.

In the afternoon, Mr. Bachelier and I spent three hours on Arenbourg, just looking about the place, seeing where the sub-surface soil from the bottom of the lake could be placed to advantage, and figuring out how the gouges made by the high water along the edge of the terrace could be filled in, - and speculating if it would be wisdom to try to cut down the terrace a foot, etc., etc.

And in the end, we returned to Melrose, where I had a flock of little things to attend to, but to which I didn't devote myself to the greatest concentration because my heart was in Arenbourg, and even though it now appears but a barren nothing, I felt persuaded that it was going to be the loveliest spot in Louisiana sooner or later.

Lo! an interval of time brings us to 4:30 a.m., and December 14th is about to dawn. I was interrupted last night, and I was awakened this morning by big Billy Porter, asking me to telephone the doctor to come to see Mrs. Elam Brown's 11 year old child, describing as frothing at the mouth. And so a new day begins and I shall have a look before daylight at what is next for Arenbourg.

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Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Well, at first off, let me report that a package, - No. 3, arrived in today's post, and it looks as though we have been blessed again with Christmas remembrances. I opened the package immediately, but as three gifts were wrapped up and labeled, I have done a little pinching, and put them back in their package, awaiting the advent of Mr. Brew who got stuck with his tractor back on Little River somewhere and the last I heard other tractors were back there, still trying to pull him out. I am glad the thermometer jumped from last night's 28 degree reading to 41 at 8:45 tonight. I shall have him assist me in determining to whom these items are intended on the morrow when he comes this way.

And so again you are worthy of our blessings for being so kind and so generous to us-es, and I shall speak of particular reactions when the time comes for the passing out of gifts about a week hence.

In the same post came, - at long last, - a fat envelope from Julius Rosenwald Foundation. I asked the clerk to read it to me, - the letter. It was the application for Clemence, together with a note to me wherein la Haygood mentioned that one thing or another prevented her from getting to Melrose during the past season. I'll say it did. She also remarked that she and Mr. Embry had agreed to waive the age restrictions in Clemence's case, - and I don't know why they should unless there were a chance of her being considered, although I didn't know there was any age limit.

But be that as it may, I got the thing off to Dora, - and least I have the whole outfit sealed and ready to go, along with a copy of my acknowledgement of the application and my thanks for extending the time limit "a couple of weeks or so", in view of its lateness in being forwarded. If I recall, the same thing happened last year in my case. Strange doings, I must say.

It is now said the Clyde Claude Emmett Davis will not be out of the hospital before April or May. It occurs to me that I had better begin contacting the local Relief Agency, for even after he is out of the hospital, Claude will not be able to do anything much, it is said, and after all, Jackie and the children, - Junior and Winnie May, will want to live somehow. The Henrys will just about

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pass out if Clemence gets on the "osenwald outfit and Jackie on Relief. None of Clemence's people, including herself, know of all the business that is being stirred up in their direction and at the moment tomorrow night's eclipse must somehow seem more or less symbolic of their present economic situation, but it only goes to illustrate again that "when night is darkest, dawn is highest".

I saw Celeste this morning. She asked me to show her Arenbourg. I did. She was enchanted. She had never before realized in all these 22 years of Melrose residence that there was such a lovely prospect as she saw from the terrace. It was a crisp morning, but all blue sky and golden sunshine. She remarked upon the beauty of the hills she could see faintly in the even South West. I couldn't make them out very well, but I was enchanted to know that they are there and doing business. They will somehow form the base on which many a majestic sunset pile of glorious thunder-heads will rise and lend vertical majesty to our immediate horizontal lay-out.

The Merchant Planter seems vaguely perturbed these days. I reckon it is occasioned by winding up the crop, figuring up the income tax, etc. etc. With the Henrys all arriving this week end, Pat, Wednesday, Van Friday, Joe Sunday, I reckon it is as well to let Arenbourg lie until they have all made their rounds and departed. About then I think I shall really put the pressure on the removal of the Peter Metoyers.

Interruption. The night has gone and a million things have started the day off with much industry. I heard Charles Laughton in Lady Esther's Ruggles of Red Gap. It was cut too much to be too good, but the best thing, making the half hour worth while, was his marvelous rendition of "Lincoln's Gettysburg Address."

Intended mentioning that the General sent me an elegant Christmas package, much cigarettes, - 10 in small packs, about the size of the films you sent, and on which I am working at the moment. There were some things that look like socks, although I haven't opened that package. With all he has had to contend with it was remarkable that he should have remembered.

The enclosed letter is from la "attison, for whom I care not, but for whom I feel sorry, since she is an embryo butterfly, caught in its crystal, and will end up by dying of regret that in spite of the fact that she devoted all her energies to preening her own fine wings, she never, through such selfishness, was able to get anyone to admire her. Aurellia is worrying me. She has just come in, declaring she can keep up with "o - a - t" alright, but when I asked her what r-a-t spelled she proudly said: "Dog". Lord, have mercy.....

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Memorandum to Clipping Service:

On Saturday, the 15th, your two most excellent reports came to hand, - those of Monday and Tuesday, the 10th and 11th, and a million thanks for all their precious lines.

I am glad the package came to your true hand at such an auspicious moment when Herr Direktor was out, and that you found the contents had traveled alright.

You were much with me in spirit all day Sunday, and especially as I carefully went through the two packages which had arrived during the past week. It fills me with gratitude to you for all the joys you have provided for all the people on our Cane River list. I can scarcely wait for the next week end to come when a general distribution will begin.

I so much enjoyed your resume of the Jones-Aswell article. Jimmy Aswell, of course, did it, and Sam Jones name appears with it to keep the same before the public eye. He expects to run again for Governor or for Senator, - it hasn't been decided which up to now. It is said that Senator Overton will not run again and may resign, and Jones may attempt a race for that seat. In either event, if he wins, Jimmy will get a good salary writing articles and speeches for the Governor or Senator. During the Jones regime last past, Jimmy had a three year job at \$5,000.00 a year, I think.

I always rather liked Jones, but my enthusiasm was a little dampened when I learned from Miss Culver that he was adamant about killing the Library Commission appropriation, which would have automatically folded up that institution, and I can't hardly see how economy would be served by suppressing book service in a State which, next to Mississippi, has the greatest number of people who are illiterate.

I am so delighted to know that you went to see and hear the Red Mill, - and that you liked it. It has been so many years since I saw it that I wonder at the freshness of my memory in recalling the several pieces you mentioned in your letter. I think they are charming and I am hoping that because of this revival, the radio will play all of them frequently.

While I think of it, I should mention that your review of the Aswell article was so excellent that I had two extra readings of the same before I consigned it to the flames. Just as we had finished reading the letter, Archilius Brown came in, and I thought he would enjoy hearing of the article, and I asked Mr. Brew to read it a second time. Then, on finishing, another friend came

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to call, and Archillius was delighted when I asked Mr. Brew to read it a third time. It provided us with much material for a lengthy discussion of migration in general, and the general conclusion was that for the present generation, at least, it would end up like the little boy who was forever seeking the House With The Golden Windows, - on the hill top just beyond the one to which he had journeyed, only to be disappointed to find that it was forever the next house beyond, - until he had encircled the globe and discovered it was his own home which he had left, that the sun had actually gilded.

And that brings us around to invitation to learning, and I hope you may have heard the discussion of Grimm and Anderson Fairy Tales. I thought Miss Le Gallienne was charming, and if you heard her, you can well imagine how well her voice records. I think I told you that she read the Fairy Stories of Oscar Wilde, - The Birthday of the Infanta and The Nightingale and The Rose so beautifully on the Reading Machine Records.

Frankly I learned much from the programme, - for example, I didn't know there were a flock of stories, many of them humorous, by these authors, which have never been translated, - from the Danish, I imagine, since Miss Le Gallienne said her mother used to sit on old Anderson's knee, when a very small child and listen to his tales.

And if I recall, both the Brothers Grimm and Mr. Anderson were 18th and 19th century numbers, and that puts in mind the fact that Cinderella was mentioned as a popular story from the pens of these great writers, - many of which they had created themselves and many of which they had taken down from the lips of the peasants, suggesting the tales were Scandinavian in origin. Unless my memory is playing tricks on me, however, a whole flock of Fairy Stories, included in Grimm and Anderson books, had appeared in print at least a hundred years before their time. I cite Cinderella as a case in point. Didn't old Dr. Perrault have much to do about the creation of Cinderella along about the time of the XIVth Louis, say in the middle or third quarter of the 1600's? I wish time had been adequate for the members of the conference to touch on that point and to have compared the style and presentation of Perrault's compositions with those of Messrs. Grimm and Anderson.

I shall have to break off at this point, for I have four people here, awaiting my services in getting off some annual Christmas letters, and writing against their merriment is difficult, and besides, I have a suspicion that these days are such busy ones for you that brevity in correspondence might be appreciated..... But there are other points to be covered and I shall come back to them later today or early to morrow morning..... Again my thanks for the two grand packages of last week and for the two grand reports arriving last Saturday.....

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December 19th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping service:

The 5:45 - 5:45 Columbia News Roundup tonight speaks of the worst snow storm New York has had in 14 years, and Bob Trout gave the colorful details. Poor you, well high snow-bound, I reckon.

It is cold here, too, but no snow thank Heavens, and the sky is all light blue with tiny star points and a great big old moon, which would have been wonderful, had it been thus polished off for last night's eclipse.

For the past couple of nights, the weather being warm and good foraging in the front gardens, some big old hog got in and routed up no end of bulbs, baby magnolias, - whose roots they adore, and no telling how many other precious plants. H. was furious and after having the ground leveled again, for the hogs really dig deep furrows in this lush soil, he passed the news around that the next hogs to repeat the business would be shot regardless. This morning, therefore, I was not surprised when around 7 a.m., I heard the explosion of a blunderbus. Later I learned that it was a 200 pound hog of Peter Metoyer's, which had scurried toward home but not quite fast enough and had expired on the roadside.

Peter, it was said, was furious and wouldn't "stick" the hog, nor would he permit any of his people to dress it, for had it been cut up immediately, it might have been put to some good use, - if nothing more than for lard. The Peter Metoyers, - they certainly are having their hard luck this year, I should say, and yet I, myself, am so furious when I think that they tore up the entire flooring in the old "raggedy" house on Arenbourg and tore out the partitions, just so the shell of the house could house their hogs, I don't feel so very sorry for them, - or rather, I guess I feel sorry for us.

And having thus arrived at Arenbourg, I will express my gratitude but once, although it merits twenty five million expressions of appreciation, - your lovely, lovely letter, registered, in today's post. Everything therein included was somehow such a part of you, such a part of Arenbourg, and such an expression of faith in what is being undertaken an invested, that I know not how to convey adequately to you a millionth part of my sentiment.

Like that interminable argument that sometimes gets started over when a child's first birth day may be, - the day he is born or a year later, I can't say for certain if this is Arenbourg's first Christmas or if next year's will be. But regardless of that, I am considering your

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report to be a kind of first Christmas for Arenbourn and for us all, and it is going to be nice treating your report as though this were the way you see the matter, too.

And while on the general subject of holiday considerations, I feel extremely noble on my own account, what with the strength of character I display in keeping my hands off a very lovely looking red starred package, arriving in package No. 3., which bears my name. Of late, I have contrived a bank of greenery in the living room, fashioned from big old limbs of magnolia, whose leaves are so elegant, and there, beneath the lower limbs, are stacked the items from your packages, - including the gift item for me, looking especially prominent because of its contrasting color, and on Monday afternoon, the individual packages will have all been wrapped, and some folks will help me distributed them after nightfall and the Enerys are cradled in their own thoughts, and ostensibly I am in bed and asleep. Frankly, it has taken some self control to restrain myself from pinching my package a little, but thus far I have kept my impulses in hand to the extent of merely giving the package a little push now and then, telling myself I am doing that merely to jockey the item into a more favorable position. But the leaves of the calendar had better fly along pretty fast, or I shall not be able to maintain my nobility for much longer.

I liked your suggestion for Mr. Brew, and I shall follow that line, for I know it would please him much, and I think I shall give his uncle one too, for Mugabou would be as proud as a peacock to have one of those items too.

Everyone once in a while I run into Mugabou in the road, and usually he stops his big old truck or tractor and tosses out some idea as to means of procedure at Arenbourn, showing that he is nursing the thought of that undertaking, which in reality he really is. Eventually, Mugabou will be one of the pillars of Arenbourn, I think, for honesty, industry and a fection are some of his cardinal virtues, and as elements in creating and maintaining our little kingdom, those qualities aren't so bad to start with.

I must break off at this point and shall skip reference to Dora's communication which speaks for itself. I concur with him in the opinion expressed regarding the possibility that Mary Frances should eventually be groomed for a Rosenwald grant, - in fact, I guess I scouted the idea in my last letter to him. If I remember correctly, however, the Rosenwald business is about wound up in 1947, and if so, I doubt that Mary Frances will be old enough to qualify.

It has occurred to me that your area may be rationed, - or if not rationed, at least kept scant on ordinary hand soap. If this be true that there is a shortage, I think I might be able to lend a hand from time to time, should you be pressed. A word from you on this point, and I shall undertake to do what I can in as short a time as possible.

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December 19th, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It's darker than Egypt outside.

A heavy blanket of clouds has hung low over the sky all day, although the rising moon, shining from behind, made traveling easy enough when I headed out toward Regis' mama's house about 6:30. But the earth's shadow had thrown a double veil across the moon when I headed back this way, and that business about not being able to see your hand before your face was in full operation.

Most of the people in these parts have never seen an eclipse of the moon, and I am sorry they were not able to do so tonight, for what with the fullness of the moon, it should have been a marvelous show.

The enclosed letter from Madam Brandon speaks for itself. I am sorry that Madam Phipps has suddenly recalled some photograph or other that she seems to have been missing, lo! these many years. I certainly wish she had spoken of it long before this late date. Mrs. Moore tells me that Mrs. Brandon sometimes misplaces and forgets items, attributing the thing to her declining years. Frankly I thought I had returned the photo to Mrs. Brandon a long time ago. I could have handed it to La Phipps as easily, for once I brought the thing back here, after taking it to "atchez, only to find Mrs. Brandon not yet returned from her annual summering in Atlanta, and somehow I had assumed I had returned it subsequently. Perhaps not. In any event I shall eventually dig into a mountain of things, praying the Lord that the thing may turn up, either here or in "atchez.

As for the balance of the letter, I know you will find it quite charming, and especially the episode transpiring at the Express Office. I am sure La Brandon handled that beautifully.

As for the Mayerling revelations, I have enjoyed reading of them with avidity, but for a while yet, I think I shall hold to our former conception of the tragedy, which seems to have been supported by so many bits of testimony down through the years. I think one motive for the new type of testimony may be found in the fact that all of Rudolph's associates at the time might have been expected to keep him and the young companion from suicide, whereas

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if they could point out that the couple were alone and that the young lady cracked the Archduke over the head with a champagne bottle, that attack would have freed the "apsburgs from anything suggesting violence and at the same time would have put the young man's associates beyond the pale of criticism because the attack took place when they could scarcely have been in a position to have intervened and saved him.

There seems to me to be something strange, too, about a valet shooting down a young lady, even though she might have tapped her friend over the head with a bottle. I think it would take quite a bottle-blow to have killed a man of the Archduke's physical make up, but even though such an attack been committed, it seems to me most unlikely that the valet should have attacked the lady with a gun before summoning the Archduke's friends and companions. As I recall, valets didn't rak high in the political or social ladder in Austria in the days of Mayerling, and while it seems most unlikely that the valet should have shot at anyone in the Imperial household or even on its fringe, it was nevertheless a very convenient person on whom to hang the deed, if one wanted to avoid questions as to why Rudolph's associates did not prevent a suicide. In a way, there is something about pinning the t ing on the valet that reminds me of the old custom of hill-billies always dragging the red herring across the road in any crime by shouting "Nigger".

And so I think I shall keep the suicide theory in mind for a while at least.

So you have been sniffing at a little package and you think you have detected the aroma of bay leaves. Well, you are perfectly right about the whole thing, and in speaking of the bay, I am delighted that you went a step farther and mentioned vert-de-vert. Immediately upon receipt of your letter, I armed myself with a pickaxe and started in on that project. It will have to soak for a day or two, to get some of the dirt dissolved away from the roots, and then I shall put a package in the mail. I am so pleased that you have so much enjoyed the original shipment that you find you can use some additional bits.

I almost forgot to speak of Regis' mama and my little conference with her. She is very bitter against the Merchant Planter and says he will never get her remaining 6 acres. I had thought he track embrace 12 or 15, but it seems some sort of a law suit not long since clipped her little strip in two. One of her problems is that she has six children and 25 grandchildren. If she tried to divide 6 acres into 6 parts or into 31 parts, - children plus grandchildren, nobody would have much, and the lawyers would get the whole thing. I advised her against selling as long as she thought she would like to retain the last of her paternal heritage, - she is the daughter of Florival etoyer. My advice seemed to please her. On saying goodnight, she hazarded the thought that I might get the 6 acres in the end. I told her not to think about that until she reached greater maturity, - she is now 74, and I dissolved into the dark.

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Memorandum to Clipping Service:

What with the uncertainty of a somewhat prolonged week end, so far as the office is concerned, I reckon I would show consideration if I kept the memoranda, written at this time, rather brief, for I assume they are likely to pile up along about next Tuesday.

I do want to say, however, that the first swell of Christmas got under way last night, so far as our interests are concerned.

Passing by this house for a few moments, immediately after supper and before joining the Madam for an hour in the upper chamber, I found Fugabou awaiting me. I had ask him to come this way before Christmas Even, especially as he was feeling a little blue after a futile attempt to buy some Christmas gifts for his children in stores at Cloutierville and Hatchitoches.

I suggested that he pass back this way about 7, which he did and we joined forces to wrap up what Sant Claus had in his sack for the house of Fugabou. It was, of course, an assortment, each item of which bore your trademark of goodwill and happiness.

For Junior there were some marbles and a pair of leather slippers, which senior told me Junior would never get, once papa laid eyes of them. And for Billy Jeanne a narrow wool scarf, since she is always carzy about wrapping things around her neck. And for both children, - the girls, a darling little set of doll furniture, which I had originally thought would be nice for Mary Frances and Willie May, until I discovered that they were slated for a couple of small doll chairs from another direction. And Fugabou thought the doll furniture was "darlin'", as he expressed it, and he wanted to do something about arraning that set of furniture when it was disengaged from his box. And then there was the book of photographs for Helen, of which she would be so proud, just to have a book of "her own-own", - and for Madam Fugabou there was a checkered skirt and a little blue trimmed with white fuzzy wool jacket, and for Mr. Fugabou an elegant scarf.

And it would have made your heart all warm and rosey, just to see how happy Fugabou was to be assured that his little family was bound to find things in their stockings when awakening on Christmas morning.

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After getting the things all wrapped up, we sat down by the fire, and smoked a cigarette or two together and drank a bottle of coca-cola, and talked much about a million things, but mostly about Arenbourg which is very special in Fugatou's thoughts.

And there was one theory which this bright, good natured dependable negro had to express that I hadn't thought of before, but which sounded very plausible. He thinks that the Merchant Planter would be rather glad to see the last of the "eter" etoyers, as they are no especial asset to the place. But being the type of person the "aster" is, he would never say or do anything that would suggest to his tenants that he would be happy to see the last of them, but rather would put on the squeeze in some round about fashion. Accordingly he will go through the gestures of providing new lumber to add on an additional room to Brownsie's former house for them, and at the same time bow to our wishes to run the line fence in such a manner as will leave whoby inadequate space for the cattle and garden which the family would need. When, on seeing that they will not be able to make it in that new arrangement, their superior will explain that that is the only place available for them at the moment, - which will not be true, and there is a possibility that the present owners of Arenbourg are difficult people with whom he has no influence, and therefore.....

Supposing that the family was one that was wanted, I had never figured out this somewhat perplexing attitude in such a fashion, but assuming that they are not particularly wanted, it all seems as clear as can be, and I must admit my informant sounded pretty logical. We shall eventually see. In the mean time, I hope they make up their minds not to cut down the bank for the animals to approach the water before they decide not to remain on Melrose.

Dr. Knipmayer came as usual on Thursday. He told me that Peter "etoyer was in an advanced stage of tuberculosis and might not live long. He visited him yesterday morning and said they had just about torn up the residence at Arenbourg. Huh.....

About 9:30, his Christmas gifts under his arm, Fugatou headed out toward home. The moon was up and as we passed by the big oak in front of the bog house, it looked like a great flat basalt fan, pressed against the rising moon. I don't know why I mention it, except that it was extraordinary and grand.

Some day I must tell you about a black-black, skinny deamon (demon) I once saw scurrying across the gardens on a wild bitter cold winter's night, seeming to be absconding from nowhere into nowhere with a long pinto cathedral window under his arm. The night was so wild, the moon so heavily wading through vast bogs of clouds and the freezing gale somehow deepened the eeriness of the picture which I shall always remember as one of the most strange pictures that ever flashed across my sight. But that is another story, although the actors aren't so new, and as it was years ago, I reckon I can wait a little while longer to impart the whole business, should the cathedral ever arise in the form of a Greek temple at Arenbourg.....

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December 22nd, 1945. I thought you would enjoy seeing the enclosed letter from Miss Louise. I shall be glad if you will kindly return it. I shall be glad if you will kindly return it.

I think all the references in it are clear, save possibly that to Miss Lucy Mathews. She is the lady who lived so long at Oakley, where Audubon taught the beautiful Miss Pirie. I think there is a sketch of Oakley in Lyle's Old Louisiana. I never cared much for the house, it somehow seems a little gaunt. According to the Times-Picayune, Mr. DeMille is now in New Orleans on business. I'd love to know the nature of it. It would have been as well to have had the recent correspondence with his office dated from Melrose, since that name is not unknown to him, what with business he did with Dr. Miller two or three years back. Being in Louisiana doesn't mean he would drop by here, but it might be that finding himself in the neighborhood, he might pause for a moment, just to have a heap of Hatches poured in his ear. It seemed so strange this morning at 5 to hear St. Louis broadcasting the weather report, with the thermometer at 77 above, while it was so warm on my front gallery that it seemed as though the waning moon must be sending down some borrowed heat from the on coming sun. The prediction for this neighborhood is warmer with rain, but the sky is as "clear as a Christian" as someone has it in these parts. Eugene, and Puny drove to Camp Polk and brought Dan Henry home yesterday evening. I foresee some little clouds on the horizon in the general operation of the plantation before the year is out. Dan and the rest of the boys say that J. H. doesn't pay enough attention to the place, that he is always in the road, etc., etc. That has always been a point of complaint, - and is true, - but nevertheless it must be admitted that if money isn't made on the plantation, it seems to roll in from other sources, - at least into J. H.'s pocket. Perhaps that is where the bone of contention lies.

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Beginning Friday afternoon, the spirit of Christmas seemed to be abroad, - what with lots of brimmers turned loose in the road to give the impression that the harvest is finished, and Temite and some of the others sagging a little as they made their uncertain way along the road. It is rather amusing to see a slightly intoxicated person, scarced to death of a Brahmer, try to negotiate his course along a highway too studded with those curiously formed animals. Wine has given a bit of courage or nonchalance to the pedestrian but the sight of that hump on the animal's back tends to sober the celebrant, and the combination of gaiety and fright makes for odd doings, which usually ends up by frightening the poor beasts into a stampede that in turn put the fear of God into the breast of the individual who unsuspectingly has caused all the excitement.

I can't recall if I mentioned the death of Mr. Dan Dabillon in my last letter. He was a prominent lawyer in Lafayette, La., and Chairman of the Board of L. S. U. with whom I have carried on quite a pleasant correspondence intermittently over a number of years. His wife was Mary Swords Dabillon, who died five years ago, shortly after I had visited in their home. She had developed a lovely garden around their modern home, and for some time Dr. Dan had been pondering what to do with the place, with a view to preserving it. I had corresponded with him on the point, and it was his intention to come here this winter to discuss plans for incorporating the place into a series of parks that would stretch across lower Louisiana, at least that was what we were hoping to do, including in the chain weeks "all's Shadows on the Teche, and so on up to Belle Grove on the Mississippi. But a sudden operation has also carried him away, and so I shall have to discuss the matter generally with someone else. It would have been grand to have had him handle the matter, however, as he exercised much influence in Baton Rouge.

I must speak briefly of his unique domestic situation. He and his wife went on a house party one week end, - a party also attended by mutual friends, including another man and his wife whom the Dabillons had known for some time. During that week end, the husbands among or between themselves, and the wives, between each other, decided that everybody would be better matched and happier, if there should be an exchange of spouses. And so as a result of that week end part, the change was set in motion, and while I know not how the other couple found the new arrangement, the new Mr. and Mrs. Dan Dabillon lived out their lives as happy as clams.....

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December 23rd, 1945.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

What with the program you indicated as being probable for Sunday, I assume you may not have heard today's invitation to learn, - or if indeed you did hear it, the circumstances were not most advantageous for so complete absorption as it really merited.

But if you did hear it under the most ideal of conditions, as did I, I feel you will agree with me that it was one of the finest programs thus far presented in the series.

Prof. Oats, Father Murray and Dorothy Thompson were all and each so exquisitely courteous, the one to the other, that the resulting harmony provided a fertile field in which one's own thoughts might spring up readily, along with the speakers, and the absence of any disagreement removed any fear of blight on the unfolding flowers of the minds of either the speakers or those who listened.

I was impressed by Miss Thompson's question: "How is it that a country so wonderful as is Germany, so marvelous in its scientific perfection and its remarkable development of fine theories of social relations, that within such a society such persecution and intolerance develop concurrently?"

And Father Murray's answer: "We live in those times when we think we can work out intellectually a perfection in human relations that pre-supposes everything except the individual imitating Christ, the individual man loving God and his neighbor as himself. And by sitting by, and letting the expert figure out the infallable, while we ourselves inclined to get so wrapped up in saving our own souls that we neglect our less fortunate neighbors, then have we nothing but the shell of Christianity and not of its spirit, and without the latter, the former is naught."

I liked the whole business, and surely learning would be the more palatable if it could be dished out more often by such a group of savants.

Another point I must subscribe to, and then I will be done. How futile it is to assume that we can study one subject or another in something like water-tight compartments, disdaining to recognize that economy, science, politics, philosophy, all these and all the rest, hinge forever, the one upon the other, and all having as their base that root of kinship of man to man and man to God.

1564

And something I learned from the Invitation was a line from Nietzsche which I did not know before:

"The first and last Christian died on the cross, - and perhaps that is just as well."

For myself, I must say I find such a statement shocking if one pre-supposes that it actually expresses many a man's theory of life, - although I am equally puzzled that so many people, especially in the current industrial and labor disputes, wherein there appears to be so much pulling and hauling by one side or the other, and apparently little or no desire on the part of anyone to "love his neighbor as himself."

The enclosed letter from Dora is rather more eloquent for what it does not say than for what is actually set down, I think. It seems to me that somehow there is a certain depression running through it, possibly creeping closest to the surface in the reference to an absence of personal mail. I reckon he must have had a letter from me about the time he posted this one, for I mailed him one with the application blank on the 19th. I shall try to rip off a letter to him today, although at the moment, I reckon he must be pretty busy working on Clemence's Rosenwald thing. In three or four letters of late I have expressed my regret to him that we could not talk over some of the points to be covered in that paper, but as he has not mentioned that point in his responses, it may be that he already has the pattern well formed in his own mind. I hope.

Interruption. The break in between here and immediately above is to write some Christmas letters for local folk to their sons in the far Pacific. Something tells me the letters will be received only after the 25th of this December, but it really doesn't matter since to many of them almost every day is Christmas, what with God handing out a new dawn every 24 hours, plus a maximum of good nature to so many of them to make the most, - as they see it, - of whatever else He has endowed them and their world, as they cheat the Devil by accepting the trials of life with stoicism and generally speaking laughing with their fellow man a little work, a little more play, - with a Godly humor, - their Christmas Day. And now Pung has barged in, bent of cheer, I reckon, and so I shall have to fold for now. ev....

1565

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Well, it's all over. And, thanks to you and the spirit of Christmas, it was wonderful.

I left the big house last night about 8. As I turned on the light, there was a tapping at my window, from the white garden side, opposite to which I had entered. I opened the door, to find Pung and Zelma dropping by to make a friendly little call. We had some wine. They sat until 9.

It was warm outside, and although it had rained in the afternoon, the sky was now deep blue, spangled with big old stars. I put on my boots, took a great big package under my arm, and headed down the road. In a way, it was almost like summer, what with the softness of the air and the brilliant flashes of heat-lightning far away to South, off Alexandria way.

I saw a light in some of the cabins I passed, and at Temites, there was a raucous sound of merriment mixed with wine.

A light shone under Clemence's door. I knocked and it opened. Yank, that big, friendly, simple negro, looked blacker than basalt, his head resting on a white-white pillow on the bed where he was resting, half a sleep. Sam Peace sat on one side of the fire place where a purely decorative little fire was burning. I was offered a chair before the fire. Clemence sat on the other side. The children were all in their beds, behind a closed door in the next room. An occasional cough from that direction indicated that excitement had still warded off sleep.

Sam, Clemence and I talked for a little while. Sam had a bottle of whiskey from which he asked me if he might pour me a drink. I demurred. Sam was quite sober and Clemence had been too busy to give any thought to the stimulant department.

In 10 or 15 minutes, Sam left. I had set my package down by the door when I had entered, and as Sam went out, Clemence took a swing at her black cat who obviously wanted to see what was up Santa's sleeve.

We chatted for a quarter of an hour. She spoke of how much the assistance that had come to her during the past year and this Christmas eve meant to her. And she talked of amusing things that had happened, and she would bend over in her chair, her head close to her knees and laugh, almost silently, but withal her rather over lean frame.

1566

In a few minutes came footsteps on the gallery, - several foot-
steps. Clemence opened the door. It was Clyde Claude Emmett Davis,
come home from the hospital to be with his children and his wife on
Christmas day. He moved with care and sat down uncertainly as persons
weakened from a loss of blood do.

Ezra had driven to Alexandria to bring him home. During
Ezra's absence, Doreatha had prepared a fine chicken gumbo, knowing
that it would be dark ~~the~~ when they got back and that the
children would be in their beds at Clemence's.

And so Ezra and Doreatha had given the supper for Clyde and
his wife, Jackie, and for King Hunter and his wife, Irene, and after
the supper, they had brought Clyde to Clemence's.

And so it made a nice little reunion all along the way, and
I was glad to talk with all of them for a while on this nicest of
nights.

And then I said goodnight and left them to be together, King and
Irene and Ezra and Doreatha leaving out at the same time.

On the road back home, it was lovely, for while it was dark, it
was the darkness of a clear Southern night which is never so dark as
in the North, I somehow feel, although I am not certain that I am right.
A million big old stars lay on the surface of Jane River, swiftly washed
out by a splash of gold, as the heat lightning away off to the South,
continued flashing intermittently.

It was Christmas eve, and I somehow wanted to walk by
Arenbourg. It was all quiet, and I risked a cotton field to
go out to the terrace. I didn't feel very much alone, - it was all
so lovely, and so definitely nothing unless it was to be shared.

And so back toward Elrose and I met a couple of old friends in
the road, and together we came silently through the gardens (inter-
ruption)

Well, comes Christmas morning, and the day begins. Little
King is first on the seen. There were a couple of presents for him,
including a handsome scarf of black and white to go with his new Sunday
hat. He was enchanted. And then came old Dave Rachel and Bill
Rocque and Sam Peace and Mitchell Gallien, the Axe. And then came
Yank and Juanita, bringing me some breakfast. And Juanita got the
spray of white flowers, which she promptly pinned on her shoulder to set
off the strange little halo, perhaps three inches in diameter, made up
of enormous pearls, that sat uncertainly on the top of her frizzled head.
And according to your suggestion Mr. Brew got a fine scarf, too, - the
light colored one with the small figures in it. And he took with
him as he left a fine dark blue house dress or robe, for his Grand-
mother.

1567

And then came Sam Brown, bearing, in lieu of a bouquet from the
Madam, a single bunch of red nandina berries. I asked him to wait
while I penned her a note, which he delivered to her along with a
tribute in kind, - not nandina berries, but a particularly
shrivelled little old green banana from the stalk hanging over my
desk. Everybody laughed at such an exchange, and the Madam roared
when I saw her about 9.

Back home at 9:15, and I found Fugabou and Puny awaiting me.
We had some wine. Fugabou said his children were tickled pink
at what Santat Claus had brought them. I think I mentioned to you
the little set of furniture, a book, some marbles, etc.

As they left, Dee-Dee Boy (Anthony, and his two stalwart sons,
Attrice and Robert arrived from Little River. Dee-Dee Boy is sweet
and his boys are very nice. Robert always reminds me of "Big Sam" in
Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With The Wind*. Attrice is a sepia rendition
of Max Schmelling, and with something of that innate sweetness that
makes one feel a better person just to have encountered him, - simple-
simple, of course, and no learning, but honest and good all the way
through.

And then came Ezra and King and Davis and Big Six.

The General had sent me some attractive little boxes of
Chesterfield cigarettes, - ten in a package, - and there were packages
for all, and everyone seemed to be intrigued by the new size package.

And when they were gone, came Clemence, who has been here for a
couple of days, helping Juanita with the pots and pans.

She said that for once in her life, she didn't have to awaken
the children, but she had made them prepare coffee before a going into
the front room. Of course they spilled the water and wasted the coffee,
but that was alright. She said they told her they knew Santa had
come to their house because they had heard him. "Well, they eventually
were permitted to go into the front room, and according to Clemence
they had just a wonderful time. But Clemence said that she herself
had been pretty busy, looking to her own big package from you, and she
says to tell you many Christmases and all, because the garment was just
made for her. She says Mary Frances was tickled to have such a lovely
bracelet. Then she enumerated other presents she had put on the
tree for the other children. It seems to me that Junior got the little
airplane, and I am quite sure that Winnie May got the little iron cradle,
for Clemence said that nothing ever pleased a child so much, and while
she would let the others look at it, no one was permitted to lay
hold of it.

So I guess it was a big day at their house, and at King's house
too, for his children received things from the same generous box and
Brother was delighted with his "Czankovsky book wherein he found so
many of his old friends & of whom he had learned so many verse already.

1568

I skipped over to say Merry Christmas to J. H. and Celeste and Madam Regard, and returning home, after a quick drink, I found Brother and Mary Frances here to say their Merry Christmases, and Mary Frances showed me her fine new bracelet and Brother had his Dojankovsky, which he was carrying under his arm, just as proud as a peacock. And then some more grownups came by, and by 12 o'clock, it was dinner time, and I joined the white folks, and we sat thus at table: Aung Cammie, J. H., Celeste, Pat, Joe, Dan, Francois, Frances Henry (Paynie's wife), Paynie, and Madam Regard. And the turkey was good and the conversation colorless, if I may use the term.

And so back home, and more colored people coming to see me, and Peter to put on a bright red sweater that Mr. Pipes had left here, and so on throughout the day, little Elam, now a big boy, taller and his old friend, and so on and so forth.

And now that the day is finished, and I am alone, I have turned to my Christmas package, and I have opened it, and I find it lovely in color and deliciously soft in feeling, and with a warmth about it that quite surpasses its actual weave.

For I have penned these lines in the quiet and the coolness of this house, and although the fire is glowing on the hearth, I am between the window opening on the back gallery and the fire place, and the draft is from the window, and I am warm, warm, in body, and glowing from within my heart, because I know there is a Santa Claus, and there is a God, which are the same thing, and there is ever so much evidence of Santa Claus and God all up and down Cane River tonight, - thanks to someone who best I know embraces all those things which are good which goes to make others happy, and me grateful with all my heart that in silently thinking in a very special direction, I find whatever approaches the good side in me reflected from afar by something, - someone who is better.....

for Clementine said that nothing ever pleased a child so much, and while she would rather the others look at it, no one was permitted to lay

many of his old friends & of whom he had learned so many verses already. Another was delighted with his "obshchivsky" book wherein he found so too, for his children received things from the same generous box and so I guess it was a big day at their house, and at Ling's house.

1569

December 27th, 1945

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Again I write you at night. Only it's different because I am more pleasantly situated, thanks to my nice wooly warm sweater. It was good to don it at 5 o'clock this morning, and after giving it a breathing spell during the day, I put it on again at sun down, and now, at the end of the day, so far as human contacts go, it is pleasant to feel it about me as I hear the rain dripping outside and I recall that this morning's weather report predicted a cooler night ahead.

The spirit of Christmas lingers on. What with the general inclination on the part of the darkies to frolic, and what with the dampness obtaining at the moment, there is nothing being done of the plantation this week. In consequence, I continue to receive quite a few callers, - ones who failed to arrive on Christmas day, and those who make the rounds again and again.

Puny was here early this morning, as he has been so frequently of late. Today he confided to me that he had seen the finest present on the river, - the photographic book which Fugabou's "elen received in her stocking. He said that he and Zelma had been to call on the Fugabous and that they had spent ever so long turning through that book of which the Fugabous were so proud to own. There's one star in your crown for that good deed.

Today was Knipmayer Day, and while we had a pleasant visit from them, we didn't learn much news. Last night a car from somewhere around here, belonging to the "Friedmans" crashed into a car full of negroes somewhere on the road to town, demolishing both cars, and burning up the one in which the negroes were riding. Dr. K didn't know how badly the people were injured, but said when they were taken to the Natchitoches hospital, they were turned away because that institution is already full and running over. I reckon they probably took them to Alexandria.

Annette du Chene of Baton Rouge, although presently living in Spartanburg, South Carolina, drove up from Baton Rouge this afternoon, to call on the Madam. She brought Mrs. Wilkinson with her, wife of the head of the L. S. U. Press. Annette, a contemporary of Lyle's, spent an hour or so with the Madam. Mrs. Wilkinson came over and spent a like amount of time with me. They were both very pleasant, and later, Annette joined us both over here. She asked the Madam if she could come to "elrose for 6 months to write a book, bringing her own cook with her. The Madam said yes to the com

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but No on the cook proposition. That is just talk, however, and I know she will nver come to stay.

She came to Louisiana to spend her Christmas holidays, arriving via New Orleans. While there, - some three or four days ago, she said she learned the river was still in the hospital and that she intends calling on him this week end. She also said she learned while in the Crescent City that Lyle had recieved ten thousand dollars advance on his Last Island novel, yet to be undertaken. Neither the Madam nor I believe that any such amount could have been advanced on such a slim prospect. Strange that such a figure should be mentioned, but stranger still that Lyle should have declared to us that he did receive money on the prospective work when he wrote here following his return from the Manhattan jaunt.

With the usual plantation routine suspended for frolics and a week or so of social life, especially among the negroes, it is difficult to round up Mr. Brew, and when once captured, it is equally difficult to get five minutes alone to run over the mail. In consequence I reserve everything for Clipping Reports, and accordingly, too, I have some letters, still unopened, that came to hand days ago. These will be shared at random as circumstances permit a reading.

To hand in the last mail was you nice, & nice note, concluded at the close of the day when the batch of Christmas letters were finished. It was so noble of you to undertake a letter under such circumstances, and I do hope you are giving yourself a little breathing space before you begin again. It is nice that you have had the aid and comfort of such a good nurse, who, I feel sure, heals not only with a tonic. So few doctors are made and nurses, always, are born and never otherwise created. I am so glad that you have a real one so close to home.

On the morrow, Joe Henry will return from Beaumont, remaining until Sunday, I think. Also on the morrow arrives Mrs. Desiree Evans of Baton Rouge, to remain for a day or two. She has something to do about L. S. U., and as I recall, she isn't particularly interesting, but we shall see.

I have a sliver in the end of three fingers on my left hand which makes hitting licks on this machine a little difficult, and so I shall content myself with this report herewith, hoping that one of the morrow I may find some bright eyed person to remove them. It seems to me I have a card or a letter or something to enclose with this letter, but nothing which needs be returned. I should have acknowledged the receipt of the Lady Lake letter in your report before the last and thank you much.

Again my thanks for such a happy, happy Christmas, - happy for our friends and happy for me, and now I shall sit for a little while before the fire, thinking on lots of things and feeling cosy and warm because of the added comfort you have with such thoughtfulness afforded me.

1571

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December 28th, 1945. James M. Lester of Waverly Plantation. He was a noble man. Our common enthusiasm in Mississippi and Louisiana lore brought us especially close, even though we seldom saw each other. But when together, we made up for lost time.

Today I read the enclosure. It isn't important. At first thought, I decided not to send it to Dora. A part of it would interest him. Another part he might not like. I suspect he is now depressed at the moment. I shall do what I can to avoid adding to his gloom. I do not want this letter back. But of I, Lester, built up a reputation as a writer, I am sorry to report the death of my friend George (Jack) M. Lester of Waverly Plantation. He was a noble man. Our common enthusiasm in Mississippi and Louisiana lore brought us especially close, even though we seldom saw each other. But when together, we made up for lost time.

I think I may have described to you his fine study on the second floor of Waverly where he and I used to sit, pouring over ancient maps and manuscripts.

And now, what of those manuscripts? If only la belle Essae Mae could have had the understanding of the value of these things, another priceless addition might have been made to the Department of Archives, - were one in existence.

And so passes a great man and a great collection. Misere! You know, one nice thing about Christmas in this remote - both in time and space, - locality. For the ante bellum idea of a prolonged celebration at Christmas time lingers on, and everything remains in suspension, so far as labor goes, so far as new undertakings go, so far as anything goes, save renewing old friendships and really enjoying the usual contacts, which, during the balance of the year, are never so constant as at Christmas time, when a week is taken off to really relish them.

And I must say that while there are the disadvantages, there are also some virtues in the custom. For in more civilized sections, it almost seems as though everyone strains to get everything ship-shape slap up to the night of the 24th, and then a real bang-up ensues on the 25th, and by dawn's early light on the 26th, the whole business is finished, and nothing do we have so much in abundance as exhaustion.

1572

But down this way, - and I suspect it is so only about between Derry and Bermuda, things start trickling a little a few days before, and somehow one finds time to carry the spirit of the season over for three or four days afterward. I reckon this year's holiday season will probably come to an end about December 29th, and probably by the 30th, everyone will be starting the new year, - not with celebrations so much as re-fashioning their new lay-out for the impending year, and probably everyone will work on January 1st just as though it were any other day of the year that is work-a-day.

I can't say that this old plantation system is any better or any worse than the contemporary industrial type, for both have their advantages and disadvantages. But sometimes, being situated where I now find myself, I do find some virtue in taking time enough out to really relish Christmas in a long draught instead of taking the holidays in two quick (two quick) and well defined gulps, - as on December 25th, and a week later on January 1st.

But a normal amount of seasonal colds are keeping some people from enjoying the holidays, and what feelings of gratitude I have that your most excellent nurse set you straight before things got to going. This morning brother came for his lesson. We didn't have much. There were too many things he had to tell me about the pictures in his fine new book. He said before leaving that his papa was sick in the bed, and could he take him an orange. He could.

Ezra's children are all down with colds, too, and Fugabou and his family, and Jack Nelson's family and Heaven knows who else. I pause to knock wood, but up to the moment I am feeling disgustingly healthy.

We had expected Mrs. Desiree Evans during the day, but a telegram, signed, - of all things, "Des", - came at first dark, saying her trip from Baton Rouge had been postponed. It seems to me there are a couple of people scheduled for the week end, but I can't recall their identity for the moment.

So things turn as we relax momentarily to gird up our loins for next week's undertakings. I must drop around to see Celeste this morning, and see if there is anything definite on the prospective flight down South America way. I can shape up my plans a lot better if I can get one good look at the calendar.....

and I must say that while there are the disadvantages of the plantation system, it is a good deal better than the contemporary industrial type, for both have their advantages and disadvantages. But sometimes, being situated where I now find myself, I do find some virtue in taking time enough out to really relish Christmas in a long draught instead of taking the holidays in two quick (two quick) and well defined gulps, - as on December 25th, and a week later on January 1st.

1573

December 31st, 1945.

Memorandum To Clipping Service:

A brief note this morning, as the old year heads on its way out. It's a perfect opening for a busy ending, - with J. H., Celeste and Charles Mazurette heading out toward New Orleans and Little King and me heading into the cotton patch, to pull as much as we can of the stalks, so that we can run a line of fence posts to determine a dividing line.

I think the enclosure is of little interest, but I liked the paragraph about Miss Eva Scott. You will recall that she lives at The Shades, near Wilson, Louisiana, and I think you have heard me speak of having spent some time there on occasion.

I know some of her darkies rather well, including Percy Belle, with his 15 head of children.

I think their gesture sweet, in view of Miss Eva's wish to collect bells, of which she has even more than Percy has of little ones.

I started listening to Invitation to Learning, - Essays of "azelit", - but didn't get far. It sounded very interesting at the beginning, but in the midst of things, - I was sitting by the Franklin stove, - when I should have been in my own house, Charles Mazurette came in with Frances Henry, - Paynie's wife, - and that of course killed the program. It is my habit to listen in by myself, but the Madam had asked me to linger with her, and in consequence I lost the whole thing. I am going to attempt a new arrangement with the new year.

The Henrys were in force, and we dined most excellently at Celeste's. Knowing that a New Orleans trip was in the cards, I took to the road after dinner, going over to see Fugabou about some labor on the morrow. But I found him in the bed, - a terrible cold, - so many of which are running around among the ca ins these days.

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But I had a nice little visit, and Helen got out her fine new photographic book and read to me a bit from it, and everybody seemed happy enough with all that Santa had sent, via of his secretary off yonder in New York.

I was interested in something Van told me indicating that the Henrys are likely to go into the Butane gas business in this area shortly. I reckon you know that Butane is the fuel used for general heating purposes in Louisiana, when wood is not available. Butane is a part of the gasoline that remains when small cracking plants have not reduced the entire drop to all its several parts. I understand that Standard Oil in Baton Rouge is the only plant in Louisiana that cracks oil completely, so there is ample sources of Butane from many different sections of the State not located in the Baton Rouge area.

With J. H. President of the Valley Electric and the Butane scheduled for consideration, it looks as though they will go right on rounding up commodities. Dan states, and it agrees with my diagnosis, that at the present breakneck speed J. H. is making, he will probably last about two years, if lucky. In the mean time his mind jumps from one lucrative venture to another and flies from one place to another with all the dash and go of a fire engine. Joe and Van are still complaining about the speed J. H. indulged in when driving to town the other day. Hitting 80 miles an hour on their return trip, they inquired the reason for the rush. J. H. said he had something very important awaiting him at Elrose. It seems that one arriving, there was a pencil that needed sharpening, and the boys are still kidding him for hitting 80, what with the pencil languishing unsharpened at home.

Brother got a vacation from school this morning, and little King is already in the cotton patch, where I must join him forthwith, and so I shall fold up momentarily, but since I am heading out for Arenbourg, I really will not be detaching myself from the telepathetic connection.

and of foot - ...

1575

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December 31st, 1945.

Memorandum to Gipping Service:

It's ten thirty at night, and I reckon this is the last letter I shall write under the 1945 date line.

It's been a busy day, as my letter of this morning indicated, and as I shall be pretty much tangled up at some unearthly hour, I write these few lines tonight.

We didn't accomplish too much today, and yet we made a start and a beginning is always something.

Things being still a little on the Christmasy side, the people haven't gotten into the full swing quite yet, but in my old role of "Patience On A Tombstone Smiling at Grief", I praise God for what advances are made today and look forward to doing more on the morrow.

We cleared enough rows of cotton stalks to establish a line fence, and we secured enough posts and barbed wire to run a strand of demarkation. Tomorrow we shall put up the boundary line and do some more stalk pulling. My hands are a-tingle with having exercised them at a new undertaking, for the cotton in many places is taller than my head, and its sturdy tap-root is correspondingly deep, making each extraction something of an experience in the art of poise. Only twice did I pull with such vim that I sat down quite unexpectedly as the darned stalk gave way just before I had anticipated.

Seeing me with one or two helpers thus busily engaged, Alfred Llorenze came over from his house, carrying an ante bellum instrument in his hands with a kind of veneration. It was a stout stick some six feet in length. One foot up from the end was a "V" shaped iron, one side of which was attached to the stick and the other projecting. He was kind enough to show me how it worked, catching the cotton stalk near the ground in the bottom of the "V", and raising up on the stick, with the end on the ground acting as a lever. It made the work ever so much easier, and he asked me to keep it as long as I cared to. It was something that the old "etoyers had always used in slavery times when clearing the fields. Now the stalks are merely ground up by the tractors, but as it takes two years for the stalks to rot down, I want to remove them by hand, and so be rid of them once and for all, - it will make planting of flowers and plants so much easier.

Alfred is a nice man and after he had instructed us in the use of the cotton puller and a couple of my friends wanted to try the thing, - like children with a new toy, I turned it over to them and showed Alfred about Arenbourg, pointing out changes that might eventually be effected.

1575

1576

"He seemed to like the ideas and remarked that he was proud to have himself living so close to such neighbors. (Thier manner of expression is always so odd somehow, - but nevertheless sweet.)

We ended up where we had started out, having visited the spot next to Uncle Doornstone last where I suggested we might eventually have a little temple or chapel or some such. He liked that, and as he said goodbye, he said he had a simple little thing, but he thought perhaps I might like it, and that he would like to give it to me, even though it had always been treasured in his family. He said it was just a piece of wood, that once had been inserted in the original Church, built by Grandpere Augustin. It seems that in 1858, on Grandpere's death, a memorial window had been put in the Church, and below it had been fashioned a plain stick of wood, whereon had been carved "In Memory of Grandpere Augustin" or some such, and the lettering touched in gold. It seems the gold has long since disappeared, but the wood and carving is still intact, and I think it was kind of him to offer it to us.

There was only second class mail today, and so I know little of what goes on in the outside world on the personal side. Being a post office, however, Melrose will receive a delivery of mail on January 1st, and somehow I feel we may have a few notes from one point or another in that go-round.

I had expected to hear the Lux program tonight, although I don't know what was being presented. Just before it was time for it, however, a couple of different people tapped on my window, having need of some letters of a strictly personal nature to be struck off and so I accorded myself greater pleasure than listening to Lux and taking their dictation.

I think I shall fold up at this point, and something tells me that I shall probably not even keep awake to hear any news. What a pleasure it is to be a little tired when one has had both feet well planted on Mother Earth and somehow had the feeling all day that here, indeed, was the beginning.....

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